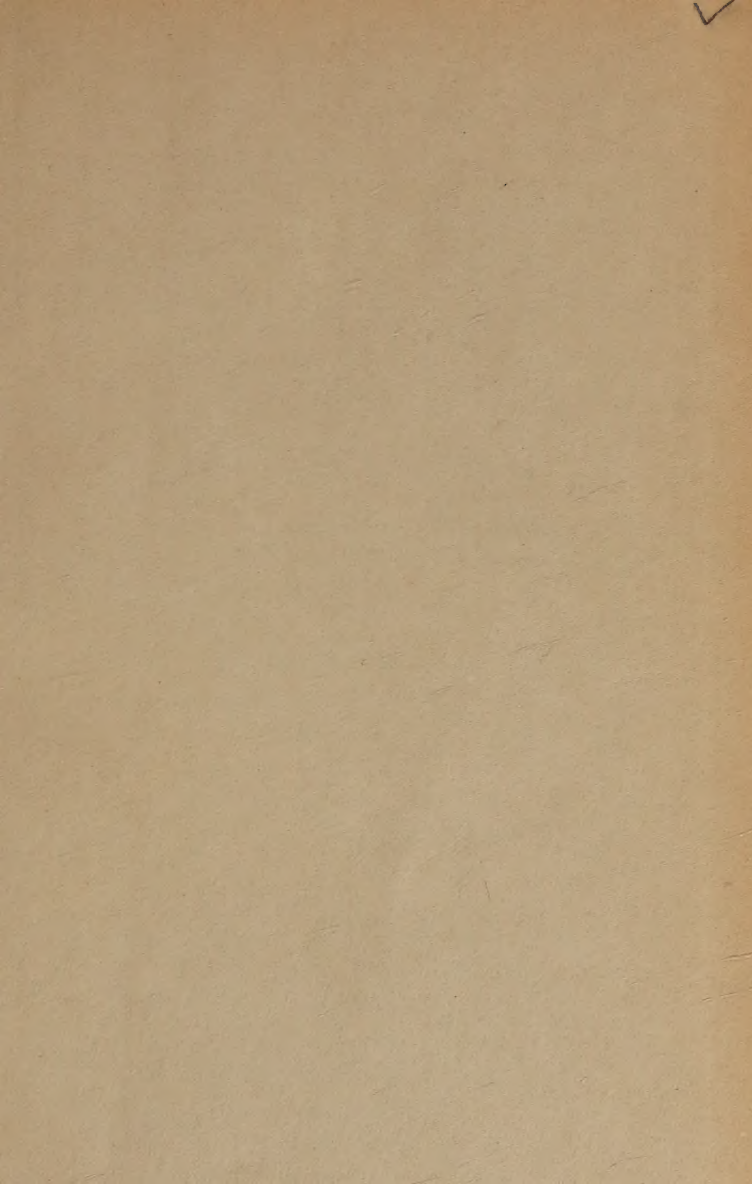


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1924-1915

RICHARD MEUX BENSON, M.A., S.S.J.E.

STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD

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INTRODUCTORY.

THE VARIOUS TYPES OF RELIGIOUS LIFE.

The members of Christ have to show forth His likeness in accordance with the work which He assigns to each. This is their vocation.

THE Word created all things. The One Word, becoming Incarnate, embodied in Himself all perfection. The individual members have each of them their own perfection, but none can have all perfections. In the original creation all things were separately blessed as being very good ; but the goodness of each was individual, not universal. So in Heaven hereafter the members of Christ differ one from another, as each represents some perfection which is derived from Christ, but all perfections are to be found only in Him.

All are derived from Him, and His Church cannot be complete until every perfection that is in Him has found its manifestation in some one or other of His members. All the grace that is

in Him must become operative in some of His members; so that the Church, His Body and His Bride, shall at length be the true representative of her Lord, possessing nothing which does not come from Him, and lacking in nothing which is to be found in Him. "Of His fulness have all we received." The Church is thus the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. No multitude of individual Saints that reproduced exactly the virtues of any of the greatest of Saints could make up the number of God's elect. That number has to be completed, not merely by multiplication, but by differentiation. A human body requires not only hands, but feet and eyes and other members. Nor is that all. The hands of the Body of Christ are needed for various purposes; delicacy of touch as for musical instruments, steadiness of motion as for painting, accuracy as for surgical operation, sensibility as for artistic effect, firmness as for mechanical arts, versatility as for complicated manipulation, muscular energy to throw and to strike, nimbleness so as to catch an object in flight, correspondence with the mind, and the will of Him to whom it belongs. Many other qualities might be mentioned. So in the Body of Christ, we have each our special function, and that function is itself diversified according to the purpose of our creation; and whatever be our individual vocation, our work must be the outcome of the

mind and will of Christ acting through us. He is both the Head and the Heart of the Body, being both God and Man. We can, then, none of us do the work which Christ assigns to any one else. We must none of us complain that we have not the special gifts of the Saints. We are not required to duplicate them as individuals, but to work along with them, as they worked for the accomplishment of the mind of Christ, as being ourselves, equally with the greatest of Saints, instinct with the life of Christ. They without us, and we without them, could not be made perfect.

We have thus to recognize our vocation in accordance with the end of our life. We may be sure that God gives us those gifts in Christ which will best enable us to fulfil our vocation.

We must act in accordance with actual gifts, accidental opportunities, the characteristics of our age, nation, and locality.

But, then, our action must be also spiritually in accord with the mind and will of Christ; otherwise it will only be lifeless, having no supernatural benediction or consequence, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" We must act for the glory of the Body of Christ, not for our own. And that glory is a spiritual and eternal glory, to be manifested in another world that our "fruit may remain" for ever. So shall "our works follow us" into the next world. What has the praise of

this world perishes with this world. It is the work of a living power, hidden with Christ in God, which issues in permanent development.

Nothing which has that life dies, but anything which has not that life, however much it may succeed in time, damages the eternal issue of our service. As our work comes from Christ, so we are to look forward to have it regulated by Christ and perfected in Christ, that we thereby may be partakers of the glorified life of Christ in the day of His manifestation.

I. As members of a Religious Community, we have to consider the end for which that Community exists. Our own individual sanctification will be in accordance with the purpose of our Society.

a. A Society may exist for contemplation, abstraction from the world, dealing with spiritual things immediately according to Divine inspiration, lifted up to God in energies of supernatural love, and consequently tested by severe Satanic conflict. Such vocations must in every age be very rare. In our present age they are scarcely conceivable. They can scarcely be true unless they are, so to speak, forced upon the individual soul by external Providence. They have to be accepted with great humility, and not to be sought after by any presumptuous self-will. Jesus was led up of the Spirit by a forcible power into the wilderness, to

be tempted of the devil. So again, He was withdrawn by a forcible power about a stone's cast from His disciples, in the last great struggle with Satan.

We are not to think of a life of contemplation as if it were a tranquil life borne upon the wings of a dove, to abide in joyous vision and be at rest in God. There can be no rest except in proportion to the struggle, no vision except in proportion to the purification of heart, no purification except in proportion as the agony of Satanic conflict squeezes out the life-blood of our corrupt nature. The spiritual deadness of a contemplative vocation can only be attained by the spiritual activity of Divine love—not a sentiment, but an energy; not gained by dreaming, but by suffering—suffering both of mind and body, accepted in the power of the Holy Ghost. We, through the Spirit, must mortify the deeds of the body. So does contemplation strengthen for martyrdom. The vision of the Son of Man at the Right Hand of God prepared the first martyr for his death. So God isolates some by long and painful disease. Such saints are called to contemplation, as a spiritual joy and supernatural fellowship with God.

We are not, however, to think that we have no need to consider the contemplative life, because we are not called to pure contemplation. Separated from the active life, it is fraught with the greatest

danger, but yet no form of the actual life can be truly spiritual without contemplation.

All else is accidental. It is the contemplative life gazing up to God and doing battle with Satan, which is the essential characteristic of all Christian life.

We must remember that our life as Religious is not something over and above the ordinary Christian life. It is only the ordinary Christian life developed under such regulations as are rendered necessary for individuals, because the Church at large has fallen away from her true spiritual calling of conscious and habitual union with Christ.

b. Hence we need exercises of meditation—mental prayer.

We are not to measure the value of our mental prayer by any pleasure experienced in attempting it. Probably it is quite the reverse. Prayer on our part is not merely an approach to God, but a conflict with Satan. Body and mind naturally droop. Moses needed to have his hands upheld.

The difficulty we experience in prayer is really the Satanic atmosphere which clouds our spiritual sense. It is not any feebleness of the spiritual gift, for the Holy Ghost helping our infirmities is Almighty; but it is the opposition of the power of darkness coming between us and God. We have to persevere and God will tread down Satan under our feet shortly. But we deceive ourselves if we

think that God will lead us by any path in which we have not to tread down the enemy.

Sleepiness, weariness, wandering thoughts, disinclination, apparent fruitlessness, and so forth, are but the power of Satan which we have to conquer by the Spirit of God.

c. So also mental prayer must be cultivated by bodily penance. We have not the physical power needed for great austerity, but we cannot rise up to the spiritual life without bodily discipline.

The pains of sickness have to be borne in this way. They are not an evil so as to hold us back from God, but they are the gripe of that evil atmosphere of life in this present world from which we have to escape. The evil is more dangerously present when we do not feel life to be painful. As we feel the force of the water when rowing against the stream, so we feel the evil of this world of sin while pressing onward to God. Life is never neutral. In the spiritual life there must be a constant antagonism to sin as an atmosphere. The world at large only thinks of sins as acts. We, as being called out of the world, must feel the sinfulness which we have to put away by every act of Holiness, the reality of the curse which we have to put off in order to attain to the final triumph of the Blessing.

Our three vows are to set us free by formulating a continual antagonism to worldly satisfaction.

The use of fasting, or of the discipline, are for this end. They are not mere punishments intended to make up for sins which have been committed. They are penitential exercises by which the loving soul reaches out after God and seeks to drive Satan away, for he trembles at every act of faith which is performed in the power of the Holy Ghost.

Penance grudgingly borne by us, as if we were criminals undergoing punishment, would only tend to spiritual degradation; so Hindu Fakeers are hardened in spiritual pride. If suffering is to be accepted with blessing from God, it must be accepted with cheerful love by us, as drawing us near to Him.

We are not to be discouraged because we feel disinclined for any austerity. We ought to be humble, as feeling our shortcoming, but we ought never to practise any austerity without offering it to God in prayerful love. Whatever comes to us by necessity must always be accepted with thankfulness.

The contemplative energy of our life is what St. Paul speaks of, as "looking away to Jesus as the Author and Perfecter of our faith." It is the consciousness of a heavenly power, even when the natural faculty seems to be utterly in the dark.

"The darkness is no darkness with Thee."

II. So again the intellectual life needs to be cultivated.

a. We are not to think that intellectual effort is not required of us, because we have not great learning, or fancy that we have not great powers of acquiring it.

The intellectual life is not purely spiritual like the contemplative, but it is essential if we are to cherish contemplation.

Some orders may be given to this as their absorbing purpose. There is great danger of the intellectual life in such case driving out the contemplative.

Men may be abstruse theologians without having any spiritual life, and are apt to be deceived as to their own sanctification, because of the holiness of the things in which they are engaged. "To know the whole Bible by heart and all the sayings of the Philosophers were of no avail without the love of God and His grace. The more thou knowest, the more severely wilt thou be judged." Our knowledge must be subservient to holiness and the love of God.

In the present day how critically do many know the text of Scripture, who yet only use their knowledge for the purpose of putting God as far as possible away from them!

So with reference to past ages, we are not to think that there was necessarily great holiness because there was great subtilty of disputation.

The use of intellect is, that by knowing the things of God we may attain to the experimental knowledge of God's love. Otherwise our learning is only like a staircase leading to the top of a ruined tower. /

b. For us, however, in the present day the cultivation of the intellect is of the greatest importance in our religious life. We are not called to edit great works, but we have to deal with an age of great intellectual activity. Our time, therefore, when at home ought to be earnestly given to the intellectual study of theology.

We have to meet continually renewed attacks of unbelief, and we are not to suppose that we can meet them offhand by our own cleverness, or that we can look for sudden inspirations to confute them.

Really there are no fresh objections that can be raised against Christian truth. Modern objections are only like fresh arrangements in the coloured bits of glass inside of a kaleidoscope. Our very special calling is to live in the study of ancient devotion.

c. The intellectual life is very different from the controversial life. There is great danger of valuing knowledge because we can put it to controversial account.

The result is, that controversial argument is apt to be shallow. Orthodox phrases are defended,

when the orthodox meaning has been lost. And then, not unfrequently, the old words come to embody false teachings. There is the further danger of relying on the intellect, as if it could maintain Divine Truth, whereas it never can. So Scholastic theology tends towards rationalism, and then to unbelief; unless it be continually guarded by love and prayer, and humility and self-distrust. Divine Truth must be beyond human definition, and in all intellectual study we must be looking up to the Divine and Infinite, however much that which is above us may be mercifully revealed to our finite apprehension. (It is only childlike hearts that can appreciate Divine mysteries.)

We have, therefore, to cherish by study the life of revelation handed down to us, but we have to look in all our study for those gleams of Divine illumination which God will vouchsafe to the humble children of the faith.

d. We are not so to study the Fathers as to receive teaching simply from them. God Who taught them will Himself personally teach us, although He teaches us through them. We have, indeed, frequently to see how they erred through the want of knowledge in their day which we now possess; but this does not impair their value. We see how their minds were fed upon what had been shown to them, and we look for the same fellowship of love to be our sustenance.

So, then, in dealing, as we have to do, with the intelligence of the day, we must see that we are living in the brightness which illuminated the intelligence of the early ages before the Church was secularized. It is not enough for us to know what was fixed as the orthodox expression; we must have our minds trained affectionately in the orthodox consciousness, which is deeper and larger than the expression.

We have to do for our day what those Confessors of olden time did for their day. We cannot do our work merely by reproducing theirs, but we must reproduce the old truth wherewith they met the error of their own day, in such form as suits the difficulties of modern objectors and the mental characteristics of modern thought. The truth is old and unchangeable, although objections take new form, and falsehood is ever changeable.

The work of such a Society as ours must, therefore, be mainly intellectual. We have not to combat the intellectual giants of unbelief, but we have to combat the half-instructed sciolists, who are proud to echo the objections of greater men without themselves understanding them.

We have, in this century, to keep in touch with scientific discovery as well as with theological traditions, but we must know our Christianity in such a way as not to be affected by the theories of modern inventions.

By intellectual study we must gather up the teachings of past ages in the fulness of its scope. We have not to maintain truth, but to live in the truth so that it may maintain us. It is no mere matter of curiosity or vanity, but of edification and piety. Does this truth sustain me? Will it sustain me in death? Is it worth dying for? Is it that which I shall know the better when I have died?

So in our Society we are not called to deal with Theology in the way of massive learning, but we have to handle it effectively as a living power.

e. Especially is this true of the study of Holy Scripture. We must use the appliances of the day in a spirit altogether at variance with the temper of the day. (Others study so as to cavil. We study so as to worship.) We shall generally find that the very objections of the day indicate to us Divine mysteries.

Instead of simply refuting an objection, we have to see whether we realize the underlying mystery which makes the scoffers object to some superficial difficulty.

The spirit of the age calls upon us as a Religious Society very specially to cultivate this devout habit of searching the Scriptures. Instead of merely giving an answer to unbelief, we have to gain for ourselves a vision of truth through the very difficulty at which they mock.

f. As a Missionary Society we are also called to

study false religions. The world delights to minimize Christianity by finding parallels to Christian Truth in non-Christian teachings. We shall learn the living power of Christian truth all the better if we come to see how those vestiges of truth failed of having real value in the heathen system for want of being combined with the other truths which Christianity supplies. The more we appreciate the occasional likeness, the more we shall see the vital difference.

g. Also, although we may not be able to study various languages effectively until we go to the countries where our Mission lies, yet we have to cultivate philology, so that we may the better be able to learn the languages wherever we may be sent. We must not think that the study of language is unnecessary because the languages of theology are no longer spoken. We have to fit ourselves for acquiring new languages. The gift of tongues will in this sense be given to those who have cherished the sacred languages of our Christian faith.

III. When we pass on to the active life, be it remembered that our activity is chiefly dealing with human souls.

We have not to cultivate waste lands and civilize a sparse population. We have to win mankind to truth and love.

a. At home we are not called to organize squalid

multitudes like the college settlements of East London. Such a mission could not be carried on without detaching several Fathers of the Society in a way that we could not contemplate. If we have a house in London, it must be mainly a house where we can be consulted by those who seek us, and from which we may go forth to help others by preaching and catechizing. It is mainly the educated classes, or at least the classes who think themselves educated, with whom we shall have to deal.

b. The constant practice of catechizing in the classes of our own parochial schools must be our great sphere of training for this work. God's providence has given us large masses of children, not only as a care to be tended for His sake, but also as a gymnasium by which we may learn to do our work elsewhere. We shall learn more of the practical use of Holy Scripture in teaching a class in school than, perhaps, in any way.

c. So with preaching. We must be very careful that our preaching is really a message from God. Would God care for me to say what I am saying? Will His Holy Spirit accompany what I say? A mild orthodoxy which does not shake our own hearts will not shake the hearts of others. It is not enough for us to enforce truths or practices because we say so. Our message is entrusted to us by the love of God, and it must not grow cold

or flat while we deliver it. The ministry of the Word is the practical end of our intellectual study. Our own life must come out in our preaching. We are not to be merely careful to have something to say when we are called to preach, but we must be living in continual preparation for the pulpit, although we might have only to preach a course of Lenten Sermons in the whole year. We must be continually developing in our minds habits of thought which will be effective for good, and if they are not wanted for the edification of others, we shall find therein edification for ourselves.

d. Some may have gifts of oratory, but they are not of much use. Great occasions like a cathedral nave have their use, but rather for ecclesiastical impression than for individual edification. People will crowd to hear philosophy which they do not understand, and those great preachments have their dramatic value for the Church at large; but we need much to cultivate the sublimity of truth which will lift people up out of themselves, and lift them nearer to God. Great care should be taken to speak as befits the oracles of God. Preaching, if it is true, must be a real act of worship. The preacher, in the fulfilment of his work, must be lifted himself nearer to God. Oratory and philosophy, however fascinating, are apt to be cumbrous, not rising above the human level from whence their instruments are taken.

The Various Types of Religious Life. 17

The more our words live in the vision and fellowship of God, the more will they raise up the hearer to live with the love of God. This is equally true of the highest and the lowest classes. It applies equally to a few people in an empty church or to a crowded congregation.

e. Then instruction. This is very necessary as well as preaching, but it is very different. It requires special classes. Whether in the form of catechizing or sermon, it must never be merely dogmatic assertion. The more full it is of texts of Scripture the better.

It must be the outcome of our own meditation. What is merely gathered from a book can have little effect unless we have lived upon that truth ourselves in exercises of devotion.

f. Then foreign missions. Our Society has to uphold its missions by continual intercession. Those who are engaged in foreign missions must realize that they are sustained by the prayers of their brethren throughout the world.

“The faith and patience of the saints.” This must be experienced whether at home or abroad, but manifestly it is called for in its highest degree amongst the heathen, speaking a foreign language and not having ideas in common with our own.

g. We are not to think waiting-times wasted. We have to cultivate the life of God, and must feel that God during all waiting-times is fitting us for

the working-time. We have to think of St. Paul's imprisonments and such-like waiting-times, by which Saints have been sanctified while apparently doing nothing.

The loneliness of a Mission Priest in a small outlying station! How important to learn the blessedness of Divine Communion with Angels waiting round about us, and ready to help when God gives the word! We must realize the solitude of the Monks of the desert, separated from all Church privileges, but living with Jesus! Similarly with the absence of books. Think how the great Saints lived upon their Bible without note or comment, and so were transformed into living expressions of the Word of God!

The poverty of outward appliances! How important to be detached from all that is pleasing to the natural sense in outward forms of worship! remembering that God accepts poverty as the best means of approaching Him.

The weariness of long travel! To estimate the value of the individual soul to whom God is sending you.

So also when there are only a few persons in church—perhaps only one. Speak to that soul in the consciousness of its value, perhaps exceeding that of a great congregation. How often has a sermon preached to a solitary stranger been a turning-point in that stranger's life! The Holy

Ghost is as truly with you in ministering to one as if you were ministering to hundreds.

A Religious Society in the present day has to be ready for anything or everything, amidst the disordered state of society at home and the demands of heathen and colonial lands.

Thus we have a world-wide vocation, with its world-wide possibilities.

h. How little do we know what God has in store for us to do! "They that wait upon Him shall renew their strength."

Waiting must not be *idle* waiting.

Waiting upon God is to hold personal communion with God, as a servant standing beside his master and watching for orders.

Then it must be full of earnest preparation—not treating two or three of our five talents as if they might be neglected. Each talent must be cultivated in a manner worthy of God, for we know not wherewith we must serve Him until we come to the mount which He has appointed.

We must remember that no labour in preparation is ever thrown away, even though we be not called to use it. God accepts the preparation, and we have to prepare so as to please Him, not for the mere sake of what we may have to do.

The constant habit of mind is *Expectation*.
"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

Readiness. "Here am I; send me."

Penitence. A man of unclean lips, needing to be purged for the delivery of the Divine message.

Submission. Ready to have our message scorned by those to whom we go.

Acquiescence. Not fretting like Jonah, but bearing with the faults of others, even as He is forbearing Who sends us.

Confidence. Assured that God's Word will bring forth fruit whether we see it or not.

Self-sacrifice. To be offered on the sacrifice and service of the faith, for our people's sake (Phil. ii. 7).

Hiddenness. As our *life* is hid with Christ in God, so must its *operation* be hidden. We must be distrustful of anything that wins man's esteem.

MEDITATION I.

THE LOVE OF THE CREATOR.

"God is Love."

IN all eternity God is Love. He needed not an external creation in order to be able to love, for love is His own Essence. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His Hand" (St. John iii. 35). The interior love of God did not originate action to supply a deficiency, but to communicate a fulness.

I. The Interior Love of God.

Although there is but One God, yet God is not a solitary Being. If He were so, He must remain so, for a solitary Being without body, parts, or passions, would be an abstract infinitesimal, incapable of any action whatever either in thought or deed. He is not an infinitesimal impotence. He is an infinite Power. He is a pure Spirit, having no body. Even the angels are not pure spirits.

They are finite, and possess only such powers as God gives them. In God all powers are one. His pure Spirit has no parts either physical or moral. He acts not by finite antagonism, as the mechanical forces of the created world would do. He acts by an inherent energy which no created imagination can understand. The man born blind cannot understand the faculty of sight, nor the deaf man receive the teachings of the voice. Much less can the creature understand the law of the Creator's action, although faith with adoring love can rejoice in the glory of the Creator's self-revelation.

We cannot understand the unity of God any more than we can understand the complexity of His Being. God is infinitely One, with a unity far surpassing that of any created existence or possibility. His unity is a living unity, an active unity, an indissoluble unity, a powerful self-sustaining unity. Otherwise He would not be an active Personality. He acts not by separable parts as a finite being, but by inseparable relationships, self-originated and unchangeable. His Life is joy. His Personal relationships exist within Him by a perfect law of Love. Love is the power of self-knowledge which makes His eternal consciousness an eternity of unwearied joy. His life is an eternity of originating Love, of all-comprehending Wisdom, of never-ending Joy. His Personality is not an

imaginary emptiness contemplating His Substance from without as an immovable immensity. His Personality is a Self-generating consciousness, the active life of the indivisible Substance which He is, proceeding in the supremacy of Divine goodness with inexhaustible activity, so that without succession and without expansion He contains within Himself all the possibilities of time and space.

The three relationships under which the Godhead is eternally conscious of Itself are what we commonly know by the Names of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Three Persons existing in the Undivided Godhead. This Triune Godhead is not only the source of all creation, but also the law upon which all created things are constructed. Triplicity is the foundation of all created forms. The unity of Divine life is the principle of unity, supplying the law by which all the universe abides indissolubly. Nature is one, because God is One. Nature abides in changeless law amidst successive manifestations, because God is changeless. All things in nature work together for good save when they are distracted by sin, because God is Love. What is at variance with itself is abhorrent to the Will of the Creator.

God is Love. The Divine Persons rejoice with one joy, each in the other, because God has all possible excellences in Himself.

The creature cannot rejoice in itself because of any excellences which it possesses, for they are not its own. They are God's gift. It has no real honour by reason of gifts which God has given. The creature in itself is empty. But God rejoices in His own perfections, because they are true and living perfections. He cannot rejoice in anything outside of Himself, because there is no perfection outside of Himself. All perfection comes from Him. God must have a perfect Love within Himself, and thus the Father and the Son dwell together in the active unity of the Holy Ghost. God cannot fail of loving His own perfections, for if He did, He would be insensible to their perfection. God has a perfect joyous Love within Himself, and He loves His creatures according to the measure in which He makes them partakers of His perfections.

No mere creature can love self because of any perfection or power which it possesses, for however great the power may be, the creature in itself is nothingness. God in Himself does not possess powers as an adjunct of His Personality. He is Personally One with His Substance, and in the Threefold Personality of His living consciousness He abides in the perfect unity of eternal Love. The Love which binds together the Father and the Son proceeds forth in eternal action by the Spirit of Love and Joy making manifest the

Power and the Wisdom whereby the Father and the Son delight eternally.

II. Man was created to find his Happiness in loving God.

God did not create man for the supply of anything lacking to Himself. His creature could do nothing for Him save what the Creator gave him power to do. God did not create man as if He needed some one whom to love. The Only-begotten Son was eternally the Object of the Father's Love, and His Divine perfections were abundantly sufficient to satisfy the Father's Love, for the Father and the Son are Consubstantial and Coequal. Why, then, did God go beyond Himself to create an external world? It was in the fulness of Love. He needed not any one whose love should add to His own happiness. In the fulness of His loving nature He created the world so that it should find its own happiness in loving Him. His creatures could not add to His happiness, but He could exercise His power by making them happy.

We see much misery in the world around, but that is not according to the Will of God. The creatures fell into misery by sinning against the law of God. Every violation of God's law must make man miserable just because the law was

instituted for the purpose of making him happy. Happiness was not intended by God as a reward, for doing a work which God wished to have done, but happiness is the outcome of obedience. Love is the fulfilling of the law. Lawlessness is sin, for it is unlove. The law is the Word of the Creator. In breaking God's law we break away from the control of His creative Word. God's gifts cannot be used to the profit of the possessor unless they are used according to the law of the Word, for that Word is the Creator and Preserver. That Word will make every one happy who uses the gifts of God according to the intention of God the Giver. It is not a mere possibility that things may turn out unhappily if we use them contrary to God's appointment. They must turn out amiss, for God's appointment is the power which acts unchangeably through the law which He has ordained. It must work with us if we are true to Him. It must work against us if we are untrue to Him. We have to accept His appointment, and our acceptance must be a work of love, for the law is an utterance of love. To fail in love to God is to fail in co-operating with God, for God is Love. Love works heartily along with love and rejoices in the co-operation. Failure in love is an insult against the Divine Love which would draw us to itself by revealing to us the happiness of obedience. We are not to think that God will make us happy

if we love Him. We are to find happiness in loving Him, and there is no other happiness which we can find.

How little do we know of the destinies and laws of the brute creation ! They are not as God created them, and therefore they fail in happiness. Man was formed in the Image of God with a capacity of love, and unless He loves God, his actions fail of satisfying God. God would make man's loving obedience to His law the means of drawing out from Himself to man that loving supernatural bounty which may make man truly happy.

Man's love to God must be an act of free will. He must act in the use of God's gifts with the same spontaneity with which God gives them. The more our love is developed in the use of God's gifts, the more we use God's gifts for God's glory, so much the greater will our happiness be. Happiness is not a future condition of acceptance at the Divine tribunal. It is the very condition of all acceptable service here and now. What we do in love we do happily, however great the suffering may be. What we do not perform except grudgingly will not be accepted of the living God, however exact may be our performance of the outward letter of the law. "I am content to do it : yea, Thy law is within my heart" (Ps. xl. 10). This is the law of true and loving obedience which God will accept.

The more we live for God's glory, the greater will be the gifts which God will give to us as means of glorifying Him, and ourselves attaining to greater happiness both in time and eternity. "To him that hath shall be given."

Serving God in the due acknowledgment of His glory, does not bring any promise of immediate assistance in temporal ways of relief, for in truth the service of God consists in acting independently of immediate result. The more we suffer, the more we glorify God, if we suffer in a true spirit of love. Self-sacrifice involves the surrender of the natural in order to hold fellowship with the supernatural.

As man possesses a double nature, spiritual and material, he cannot have any true happiness in which the spiritual nature is not supreme. The fallen Adam is incapable of the proper happiness of man, because he has lost the spiritual power of communion with God. His acts can only serve his lower nature. All that belongs to that lower nature, however sublime, is degrading to man, unless man can use it to the glory of God. In that elevation the meanest of mankind will find happiness, vital, true, eternal, expansive. Without the exercise of the spiritual nature the highest philosophic genius fails of all true happiness, for the sublimest thoughts must end in death, unless they have practical reality in the living fellowship of God.

Love is a mutual relationship. In love we give ourselves to God, to die to all but Him, and God gives Himself to us to be our life. We therefore receive the bliss of God into ourselves. This sustains us in love. For this purpose man was created in the Image of God. He was not created in order to be gilded in another world, but to glow with an indwelling glory of holy life and joy even here.

Such is the glory of love. Adam was created in this glory, and his body shone with it until, by loving the earthly instead of the Divine, he forfeited the Divine, and the glorifying presence of the Holy Ghost was immediately lost.

Now, the joy of the Holy Ghost is given back to us by our union with the glorified Body of Christ. Christ is a glorifying Principle of Divine life communicated to our hearts, as the basis of our regenerate nature. That joy has to win its triumph over the whole external nature. Our life quickening our hearts is nevertheless hidden, and struggling. It is hidden with Christ in God. But the heart of the faithful knows the joy of Divine service. The fruit of the Spirit is love, and therefore joy. Without cultivating this joy we cannot rise to our complete service. Therefore it is said, "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice."

O that we were less sensitive to the excitement

of earthly joy! Then we should know the true joy which alone can last, alone can satisfy, alone can elevate.

We grow towards the end for which God has created us, as we come to advance in His love more and more. God is revealed in us as His Image. He is our Life, our Joy for ever. "O taste and see how gracious the Lord is!"

III. All Misery consists in failing to love God.

It is not God Who withdraws His love from us. God is unchanging Love, but the love of God cannot be appropriated by us without correspondent love upon our part. The faculty which should live by loving God, dies necessarily if it be not exercised in that spirit of love.

God is not a finite Being, so that He can suffer His love to be set aside, and treat the unloving one as if nothing had happened. It is our duty as creatures not to stand upon what we may call our rights. We are worthless, and if we love God we must feel our worthlessness. We are unworthy of love. Nothing in us is worthy of love save the Divine Presence. "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. vii. 18). To insist upon a Creator's love is to fail of any claim upon it.

Not so is it with God. He must insist upon

His rights. He cannot withdraw His claim upon our love without forfeiting that claim. It is only in virtue of that changeless claim that He can exercise towards us His own infinite goodness. He ever speaks, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." But He cannot give us rest unless we come.

His loving power is the principle of light and order throughout the universe. When the prince of this world, in the pride of his self-satisfaction, withdrew his love from God so as to centre it upon himself, his whole dominion became without form and void, and darkness came upon the face of the deep. In the power of the Divine love, this globe of ours would have been a living organized home of bright activity. So shall it be when there shall be a new world wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Now we see the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain, because all its efforts are futile. They are no longer in touch with God as their living Principle and their only End. How the brute and vegetable creations would have shared in the angelic life, we cannot say. Nor do we know the relation of the waters and the earth to this universe of life. Death has passed upon all. New life shall quicken a new universe with the love of God under the presidency of man, with Christ upon the heavenly throne as King and Head and Life to all in various degrees.

O the misery of this present state while sin is dominant! Satan has been conquered, but still he rules, as rebel chiefs may occupy a territory whose cities have passed under the sway of some conquering power. There can be no true happiness in the world until Christ's kingdom comes. Then shall all the powers of sin be cast into the abyss. All is struggle until that moment comes. How we ought to pray for it! O how miserable is our condition if we are not living so as to have our part in the glory of the Resurrection! We shall rise to the love of God if we have lived to the love of God. All our sorrows in the world can only be for want of the love of God.

“Be Thou our Joy, and Thou our Guard,
Who art to be our great Reward.”

Every created faculty of mind, body, or estate only tends to destroy itself unless it lose itself by giving itself up to the love of God. In Him all joy is found. In Him life is unceasing and increasing joy. Men know not why they are so miserable. They set down this misery to outward circumstances instead of taking the burden of it upon themselves. To live to the world is to perish in the world's unlove. To fight against the world is to attain the joy of God. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even faith made perfect by love. Love accepts every toil. Love endures

every conflict. Love rejoices to be wounded by external violence that it may be more truly manifested in Divine allegiance. Love sees God increasing strength in every time of need. Love renounces earthly pleasure, and finds security amidst all pain. "Yet more, O my God, yet more!" was the cry of a faithful sufferer in great affliction. We rejoice in tribulation because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. God has created us that in loving Him we may find eternal joy. We cannot fail of that joy except by hugging to ourselves the pleasure which the world would give—a world of death; a pleasure that multiplies death in proportion to its seeming security; a death, a doom of endless loss, swallowing up the whole nature in the darkness where the light of God's love can never more be known.

MEDITATION II.

DEADNESS TO THE WORLD.

In our Baptism we receive grace to be dead to the world, by union with the body of Christ Who has died. As Religious we avow our special acceptance of this condition. Our bodies are alive to the world, but we are dead—dead by the grace of Baptism, dead by the necessity of Religious Vocation, dead by the vows of our profession.

I. *The Grace of Baptism.*

BAPTISM is a death unto sin—but the outer life remains round about us. The law of deadness is to spread from within, and take possession of our outer senses. “I will run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou hast set my heart at liberty.” That liberty has been obtained for us by the death of Christ, but it requires to be appropriated individually by each one of us as members of Christ. The spreading of the inward life outward is the deadening of the outer life.

We have to bring every thought into subjection to the service of Christ. All our outward sensibilities have to be subdued to the new Body of Christ

which is being formed within us. As that inner Body is formed, the old body must drop off.

We cannot die to the world except by the grace of this inner Body growing within us.

No amount of austerity makes us dead to the world. It may make us to die, but the death is mere suicide. It is death still under the dominion of the world. The worldly heart finds the deadness of the things which it has sought, but does not die *to* them. It dies *with* them; they only master it the more in death.

But the cultivation of the Bodily Presence of Christ within us is a development of purified nature, while the austerity binds us to do only those actions which Christ would have done. Worldly religion may assume the mask of Christ's likeness, but that living fellowship with Christ which makes us die to the world, supplies the living tissue of the regenerate Humanity to take the place of "the corruption which is in the world through lust," with all the impulses of passion which stir us from without.

Such austerity needs continual watchfulness, for the corrupt nature is ever seeking to suffocate the interior nature.

It requires that we shall die to all carnal delight, even in things which are good. We are to sacrifice them to Almighty God. Carnal delight, even in the holiest things (habits of thought and

philosophy, acquisition of knowledge, schemes of philanthropy, æsthetic propriety, influence in society) hinders the development of the Christ-life by strengthening the natural will.

“The Son of Man in doing good
Was wont to look to Heaven and sigh.”

So there must be outward sacrifice if there is to be inward growth. We must be dead to the world in all things. We are not dead merely by being apathetic or discontented in some things.

Pessimism is a result of being keenly alive to the world. If we are dead to it we shall not be distressed at finding things go wrong, for we know that everything in the world is going wrong, and we know that things which are wrong in themselves turn to our good, for they force us to be more simply alive to God.

So also over-eagerness, when we are successful, is destructive of deadness. It calls us back to live to the world. We must not take pleasure in the success of anything that we do, except as a means of glorifying God. The result of all our actions, whether they outwardly succeed or fail, must be treasured with God.

So shall carnal delight and personal bitterness pass away, and we shall find acceptance in God's love by the power of the Holy Ghost.

He is the God of Peace Who keeps our hearts.

II. *Our Religious Vocation puts upon us a Special Necessity of Deadness to the World.*

God calls us out of the world so as to be seeking repose in His love. There is more excuse for secular Priests to be engrossed in the worldly side of spiritual things. If God calls us apart, it is because He wishes to speak with us apart, and then He puts His fingers into our ears and touches our tongue that we may know the highest joys of communion with Himself. So we listen to Him!

He calls us apart in order that we may specially contend with Satan. He expects from us a higher *order* of service—a spiritual order of service—differing from that which an energetic Priest with practical ability is able to render. Those who are in the world must in many outward ways be conformed to the world. They have to use the world's instruments. God is unable to use us for His own special supernatural communications, unless we are learning to find our pure joy in spiritual fellowship with Himself. Some one said, "How sweet it is to die!" But at the same time, death is a struggle with the last great enemy. Jesus calls us to the *lifelong struggle* of this death. This enables Him to manifest in the faithful Religious the unceasing vital power which comes to us as death goes on. Religious life cannot be without a bitterness proportionate to its sweetness. We

must take good care not to be doubly slain by the bitterness, forfeiting the sweetness because we fail of the true life.

God calls into the Religious life those who are to do some special work for Him. We must feel that the work is summed up in the word—*to die*. What we do accidentally or outwardly, we do in common with all Christians. To be dead to the world while we are in it is the speciality of our Religious vocation.

Martyrdom was the summary of life of the Saints of the first age. Then there was no special place for Religious. Now we are not at present called to martyrdom in most of our vocations, but we have the lifelong martyrdom to bear of constant spiritual mortification. This is our calling as Religious. We must accept every *difficulty* as the very occasion for which God has called us into the Religious life.

Woe be to the Religious whose life is prosperous in all things! If we would have the new name of Israel, we must halt upon our thigh, as Jacob did when he won this blessing.

God calls us to die in order that He may make His work by us immortal. That death is not the mere outward death of a frame worn out by our work, such as a Secular so often has for his reward, but it is a higher reward of spiritual dying—all that we naturally cling to being taken from us as the

prophet's wife. We are therein to learn the joy of our betrothal to God.

III. The Vows of our Profession pledge us to this Deadness.

God has called us to it and we have accepted it. Our will must therefore rise up to delight in putting aside all that gives special life to our own desires. We do not come into the Religious life to fight with Saul's armour, but with the stones out of the brook. That brook is spiritual deadness to the world in the grave of Christ, whereinto we have been baptized. We have chosen the harder path, looking for the higher victory, and we must accept the heavier blows from the enemy.

The secular Clergy have specially to contend with the world, and worldly means are natural for them. We are specially called out of the world to contend more immediately with principalities and powers in heavenly places. We are not rising up to our fight if we are so living in any form of worldly expectation as to rely upon earthly results, instead of reaching out after heavenly verities.

We must in some way feel ourselves to be under a curse if we would *be* a blessing. So Christ became a curse for us, and thus we have taken up our cross to follow Him closely, and must share the curse on behalf of those to whom we minister.

So, by faith, Isaac gave himself up to be offered, knowing that God through his sacrifice would make him to become a blessing to the whole world, as had been promised to Abraham his father.

We are not, then, to be surprised at any assaults of Satan—temptations, whereby he seeks to lead us into evil; snares, whereby he seeks to hold us back to some immediate and visible result, instead of letting us pass onward to the greater spiritual triumphs.

Satan's manifest assaults by wicked thoughts are not so dangerous as his hidden activeness in making things seem prosperous and beautiful, so that we fain would be contented in them. "This is not your rest."

Spiritual self-satisfaction, in the absence of temptation, is far more hurtful than any foulness of imagination which humbles us and makes us hate ourselves.

We are not to think that we can die right off by any *single* act of self-oblation, however vehement and however sincere.

Our Religious life is a life of crucifixion. We are vowed to the Cross of Christ, there to hang and to be starved amidst many pains, during many weary days of suffering.

Christ did not die *by* His pains, but *in* His pains He gave Himself to God, that we in our pains

might have eternal life, when we shall be able to say, "*It is finished.*"

We have been chosen and we have accepted the call. As we look forward we must remember the warning: "Many that are first shall be last, and the last first."

We must never think ourselves ready. "Lord, I am ready to follow Thee to prison and to death." We know not how much there is within us which needs to die, and we must be thankful for every pain which helps us to be more dead. We do not die by accepting outward forms of death, but by rising to the acceptance of God, in the midst of such modes of trial as He gives us.

We may be no more dead because we are immured in a tomb, than we may be in active missionary work.

In a tomb, we might be always thinking, here *I* am.

In active missionary work we may be lost to self and acknowledge, "Henceforth I live, yet *not I*, but Christ liveth in me."

The thought of self is the essence of living to the world.

The thought of Christ is the essence of being dead to the world—the thought of the living Christ at the Right Hand of God, with Whom our life is hidden in God's glory.

If we would be dead to the world, we must realize

how good it is for us that He is gone away, for by His Holy Spirit He has taken us to be with Him where He is. Already we are pledged by our vows to rise up to the fellowship of His Divine life. Henceforth know we Christ no more after the flesh.

As we die to the world increasingly, we must know Christ increasingly. Dying and living are as the two sides of the veil which hung before the Holy of Holies. We pass under that heavy curtain, and die to the world. We pass onward, and live with the ever-brightening vision of the glory of God.

MEDITATION III.

OUR LIFE WITH GOD.

We are called to be dead to the world. But this would be of no avail, unless we were alive to God.

I. *A New Birth unto Righteousness.*

1. WE die to sin by being buried with Christ. Our natural being passes away from us as a dead thing, a thing of the past. We are taken into the Body of Him That died and is alive again, the renewed Humanity wherein we become members of the Second Adam. This fits us to receive the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of Life, for the Holy Ghost is the life of the risen Body of Christ. He no longer lives with the life of the natural body—the breathing of the outward air, the circulation of the blood as the cleansing principle for a body subject to corruption. He lives by the power of the Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity; Who proceeds from Himself and from the Father, by Whom He at first took our natural body, of the substance of the Blessed Virgin Mary,

and by Whom He now acts and lives in that Body, and consequently in all its members, and therefore in us.

2. This life makes us partakers of the Divine Nature, and the children of God. We are born again.

a. This new birth is not merely a new way of living in this world. It introduces us into a new sphere of life, as truly different from our natural sphere of life as the life of a bird is different from its life ere it had left its egg.

This is the great distinction between Christianity and all possible religions. Other religions may inculcate new modes of action. Christianity communicates a new power and a new form of life. Nicodemus, however pious as a Jew, needed a new birth in order to be admitted into the Kingdom of Heaven.

b. This new life is very different from a new code of morality, and very different from a purification of nature.

A nature may be purified, and yet remain the same. Regeneration is a new nature. No other religion, save that of Christ, professes to give it.

The Hindu has the phrase, "twice born," but he does not mean by the term anything that makes him different as a man from other men. It is a difference of honour and sacredness, but often the lower caste will be the superior in all natural

gifts and powers. The Christian is taken up into the fellowship of the Divine Life. Hence we speak of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the virtue of His infused and ' Deific Humanity ; and of the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, the actual Divine Life into which we are assumed by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, consubstantial with the Father and the Son.

II. Our Life in God a New Sphere wherein we possess Supernatural Powers.

1. In this sphere we are admitted into Divine relationships. Relationships constitute the sphere of life, whether natural or Divine.

In our natural life we have relationships of consanguinity, friendship, business, pleasure, country, etc. To this we die.

In our supernatural life we have relationships to the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, to all who in any way share this life, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints. To this we are admitted by the new birth.

As the husband takes his bride into all his relationships, so Christ takes each one of us.

2. We have been taken into this life of Divine relationship ever since our Baptism.

We shall not be any more truly partakers of these relationships when we pass into another world than we are now.

✓ This assumption into the Divine relationships is as real as the relationships of earth. Nay, more ; it has the substantive reality of God Himself. Those who are related to us in earthly ties, are merely bound to us. The bond may be broken. But God is not bound to us. He binds Himself to us. He is the eternal bond, the substance whereon we have to rest. He binds us to Himself as the magnet binds the iron, but with a living attraction, the power of His own eternal Life. He does not merely hold us close to Himself, but takes us into His own Substance, that we may live with His communicated Life, and He may live within us.

As Christ is one with the Father in the bond of the Holy Ghost, so we are made partakers of that eternal unity of life.

We are taken up by the Spirit of Christ into the unity of the Body of Christ, and therefore share the Divine Sonship.

Adam saw that the woman formed out of his side was bright with the sheen of the Divine Life which clothed himself. Therefore he knew that she was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. She was not like the other animals, a mere creature of earth. So we, being united to the Body of Christ, are partakers of His glory. "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them." He is the Second Adam ; the Church is the second Eve. He and we are one in the Life of God.

3. Now by faith and in the power of grace we have to be true to those relationships, appropriate them, exercise them, develop them. Hereafter will be the manifestations of the Love of God, whether we have lived true to His relationships or not; and whether we shall abide in their glory, or experience the shame of having fallen away from them.

These relationships are not like those of the natural world. As they are supernatural, they must be appropriated. The probation of our earthly life is for the purpose, not of developing them, but of establishing them by voluntary effort in the exercise of grace. They are the gift of God, but acceptance is necessary on our part. We cannot purchase them by anything that we can do; but as Christ has purchased us to be His Bride by the bridal gifts of corn and wine, and oil in Sacramental grace (Hos. ii. 20, 22), we must acknowledge that we belong to Him, and we must be faithful to Him as the Lord of our hearts. For His sake we must be ready to suffer. Our natural slavery under Satan's tyranny must be set aside by the steadfast purpose of our voluntary resistance, and the law of grace must be held fast by the steadfast allegiance of our self-surrender.

The purpose of our Religious vocation is to make us more sensible to the reality of our obligations to Christ as our Redeemer. We are made His

members in Holy Baptism : and by our Religious profession we accept the relationships of Christ's life as the law of conduct which must always occupy the foremost place in our hearts.

III. *Our Religious Life enabling us to cultivate these Relationships.*

Hence the need of contemplation, that we may drink into the Spirit of Christ with conscious delight in His regenerating and transporting energy, while our activity must be something more than the energy of outward service. It must be in us the exercise of those Divine resources which contemplation cherishes.

1. *Membership in Christ.* We have to live in the consciousness that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is our Father. We own Him and avow Him before all the world to be just as truly our Father as He is Christ's Father—His Father eternally and by the Incarnation ; our Father because we have died in Christ to the lower life wherein we were born, and we live partakers of His Sonship through the grace and power of His Resurrection.

All filial duties pass on through Christ to us. Our absorbing duty is to glorify our Father Which is in Heaven. Not "to save our souls," as people

talk. No. We *are* saved. Any thought of saving *ourselves* hinders the simplicity of filial love.

2. *Our relation to Jesus Christ as the Head of the Body.*

a. Jesus Christ, dwelling at the Right Hand of God, is personally interested in the heavenly consummation of His Body in Glory.

b. "Thy Kingdom come." If we are vowed to the relationships of this Kingdom, it will have for us a higher interest than the mere accidental features of the Church on earth. Christ's Human Will is a channel of Divine inspiration whereby He trains His members to live for the glory of the Father, in the power of the Holy Ghost. His individual guidance is given to each of His members for the combined perfection of His Body in the glory that is to be.

3. *The Holy Ghost, proceeding from Christ, and dwelling in us, necessitates our working in the common life, for the common aim.*

Life in community fosters this habit of self-forgetfulness. The true Religious acts as he is bidden, and without selfish desire or choice. It is the same whether the work be done by one or by another. The only purpose is that God may be glorified. The solicitations of self-seeking are hushed by obedience. The work of the community takes the place of individual distinction. We must indeed be careful to avoid even corporate pride,

remembering that our Society is dead to the world.

The wedding chamber where the Society rejoices in the espousals of Christ is a cloister into which the scrutiny and the applause of the world cannot come. "Being reviled, we bless."

It is a sacrilege against the vows of our dedication when any schemes of secular usefulness draw us away from the simplicity of supernatural allegiance to our Crucified and Ascended Lord.

MEDITATION IV

THE FACULTIES OF OUR LIFE.

We are created in the Image of God; otherwise we could not exercise the life of God.

I. *The Memory.*

By this we hold special relationship with God the Father, the Foundation of all being.

1. The importance of all Christian truth is to give solidity to our life. We do not live for imaginations or speculations. "What we have *heard* and *seen*, that declare we unto you."

The importance of the study of Holy Scripture is to enable us really to live upon the Food of Divine Revelation, God Himself—Truth—not a mere lifeless thing remembered by us, but—a Living Principle; so that Holy Scripture feeds us with mystical power. It does not make us learned, but wise. It instructs us unto all good works. The revelation of God's will is a perpetual revelation, for the will of God is

unchanging, whatever may be the accidents of our outer life.

2. God has a great purpose for mankind, and for each one of us, in accordance with His general purpose for all.

We do not see God's purpose, but we have to act upon the revelation of His will—His children remembering their Father's bidding.

We must be diligent in the reading of Holy Scripture, so as continually to remember how God has dealt with His people of old. That helps us to behold Him in His changelessness. Great is the danger of supposing that God will not deal with us as He did with the Patriarchs in the Old Testament, or Apostles in the New. We do not find God the same, because we do not approach Him as they did; but the change is in ourselves, not in Him.

The Religious must rise superior to the fashions of modern thought; he must seek to use the hidden powers of the Divine Life, so that they may be as great a shelter to separate him from the world around as the restrictions of Mosaic appointment were to the faithful Israelite. The Heavenly Zion ought to be a greater power to us than the earthly Zion was to them of old. They hoped for Messiah to come to the earthly Zion. We know that He is already enthroned upon the Heavenly Zion, and He has called us to

share with Him in the glory of His Heavenly Throne.

We must remember to do all things to the glory of God the Father. So it was that our Lord acted, never seeking His own glory.

How apt we are to do things because we think they will be good and useful, or because we like them, or because others do the like. The absence of any vicious intention not unfrequently blinds us to the real shortcoming. We may do something which is very good in itself; but we have not remembered to do it to the glory of God the Father. Therefore, after all, it comes to nothing. If we fail when we are conscious of having acted to God's glory, we must not be disappointed. Our life as Religious cannot fail if we keep the principle of the Divine glory steadfastly in mind. It is this active, loving memory which constitutes the reality of all Religious action. Our daily Rule, the Offices we say, have no religious value unless we remember thus to be saying Office and doing all our work for God as His children in Jesus Christ.

Memory looks back to the predestination of God, from Whose will all the past ages have had their law, almighty in its control amidst the wilfulness of man. We must feel, as we remember this, how that Divine impulse comes to operate upon ourselves. We have to carry on God's will,

and to associate ourselves with what we know to have been His purpose. He speaks to us by Revelation. He speaks to us by Providence. We must always bear in mind what He from time to time has taught us. He watches us as closely as He watched Abram of old. That personal guidance, if we remember it, will save us from manifold errors of self-willed experiment.

II. *The Understanding.*

This specially binds us in our relationship to Christ as the Wisdom of the Father.

1. Our power of meditation is by virtue of union with Christ, Who beholds the Father and reveals Him to His members by the Spirit.

The Spirit does not illuminate our minds in their human individuality, but as the members of Christ. He is the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding.

2. The knowledge acquired by meditation is quite different from the mere intellectual apprehension of human learning.

Knowledge acquired by meditation in the power of the Holy Ghost is a living sensibility for Divine Truth.

3. There is a danger of having the Spiritual understanding darkened by words without knowledge, reducing heavenly things to earthly expressions, and so continually tending to heresies.

Divine Truth must lift us up to God, in order that we may understand it. If we drag it down within the measures of the earthly understanding, it loses its life.

It is not the less real because it is thus supernatural and Divine.

4. The two Natures of the Glorified Saviour have each their part in meditation—the Human giving reality of form, the Divine giving reality of substance as a living communication from Christ.

Christ is the creative Word Who speaks, revealing to us the Father's Will. All truth is enshrined in Him as the active Principle of truth. The things of nature are not known to Him, as to the ordinary human intelligence, by outward observation. They are what they are because He knows them in the fellowship of the Father's eternal Will, to which He, as the Word of the Father, gives effect. The things of grace are not to Him the accumulated experience of three and thirty years which He has found rising up before Him out of an unknown depth of darkness. They are the foreordained law of His life which He has accomplished in perfect obedience to the Father's Will. In all that His Humanity has experienced, He has also foreseen all the details of individual discipline by which the several members of His Body would be individually sanctified, and He has borne everything with a purpose of love towards each one of us, so as to

communicate to us by His grace that power which He has developed in Himself.

How great has been His love to us both Human and Divine !

How great the love which provided such gifts of grace with Divine power so as to make us worthy of our part in His glorious Kingdom !

How great the Human love, by which the organism of His Humanity, in exercising its perfections, was pleased not to rest satisfied with His own Righteousness as a self-contained result, but found His satisfaction in communicating the grace which He thus brought into operation, giving it to each one of us to raise us from the misery of sin and death !

In all our meditations, the understanding must be illuminated to behold the Personal glory of the Incarnate Saviour as the foundation of faith, hope and love. Our meditations will be of value in proportion as they are the truthful mirror whereon Christ is revealed in our grateful hearts by the power of the Holy Ghost.

III. *The Will.*

The Holy Ghost fills the heart with the love of Divine Truth. We cannot know Truth as a living power unless we know it in the power of the Spirit of Love.

1. Stubbornness of human will is not to be confounded with the strength of the supernatural will which the Holy Ghost gives.

The natural will springs from self.

The will as taught by the Spirit of God springs from God.

"Not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

"I come to do Thy Will, O God. I am content to do it."

The supernatural will looks back to God's predestination ; and onward, to God's consummation.

2. The transitory delight of outward success, or the regrets of failure, are lost in the overwhelming love of God to which we are submitted in the Body of Christ by the Person of the Holy Ghost.

"I come not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me."

A philosopher may have an apathetic indifference, but the Holy Ghost fills the will with a Divine energy and instinct. All that happens is regarded with a view to God's final purpose ; and present failure, instead of discouraging, only tends to stimulate faith.

Since the will is for the things of another world, the difficulties of time are accepted as the means of attaining the true end.

The glory of God is the true object of the will.

The Holy Spirit teaches the will to seek that glory in its purest form.

Hence we rejoice to accomplish the Will of God rather with difficulty and suffering than with ease and personal gratification, because there is more exercise of love.

3. The Holy Ghost gives us such an understanding of God's Will, that our own will delights in the mysteries of His Providence, against which nature is apt to rebel. We do not accept pain as if it gave us some claim to compensation, after the manner of a natural moralist or a Hindu Fakeer. But we can rejoice in pain, because it gives scope for the greater love of God. Love never suffers in vain, but love grows by what it has to suffer.

It is so in natural objects. The more we have suffered for any object, the more we love it.

So in Divine life, love strengthens the will to lay hold upon God just in proportion as we have had to suffer.

The Mind of Christ is realized by us in the power of the Holy Ghost, while we take up our cross and follow Him. That Mind is a practical, loving energy of wisdom. Without the cross, no crown ; because without the cross, no love.

Our life as Religious must be a joyous life of ineffable love. Without such love our external observances will be of no avail, for they will have

no life at all. Without such life the highest perfection of outward routine is utterly valueless. Indeed, there is great danger lest the culture of the external means of propriety and power should strain the spiritual faculty and destroy the life. It is so with the artistic adjuncts of service. It is so with the seemingly discipline of domestic rule. It is so with the various artifices which may make preaching popular and give it an apparent effectiveness.

Mechanical power may turn out its results by the dozen far more quickly and surely than hand-labour can, and each thing may be more perfect than what comes from living effort. With us as Religious, we must remember that this does not hold good. What we do must be the exercise of faculties of living power animated by the Spirit of God. Our preparation for everything must be a prayerful act of homage to Almighty God, and what we do in His Name must be felt to be instrumentally subservient to Him. It is He Who is doing the work. Our faculties must be humbly recognized by us as having a Divine life, as possessing this original power from Him. That power is within us as a vital energy, and the measure of our truth, as acting worthy of our Religious Vocation, will not be proportionate to the successful culture of the faculty as directed towards men, but to the devotional vitality of the faculty as inspired by prayerful fellowship with God.

The life is transmitted through our faculties, but it is not our own. The life is the Life of God, and the faculties will shine out with the glory of Divine life in proportion as we ourselves are lost in God.

MEDITATION V.

THE END OF MAN.

Man was created by God. Man was created for God. Therefore, man must serve God.

MAN'S whole nature must be consecrated to God's service :—

1. The Memory by Divine command.
2. The Understanding by Divine partnership.
3. The Will by Divine inspiration.

I. Obedience to Divine Command.

1. God has spoken to us.

He spoke to Adam and gave him a command.

Adam was to remember this as the principal object of his life—to obey God.

“Mine ears hast Thou” given me (cf. Ps. xl. 6).

God gave us ears that we may hear Himself speaking to us, and may *obey* His command.

The outward ears are the instruments of the outer nature in the kingdom of Providence. God gives the inward ear of Divine learning to those who ask Him. We must be watchful to hear what God says. He speaks not commonly so as to startle us, but with "a still small voice" which the attentive soul will recognize.

We must be obedient to those intimations which God gives us, otherwise we lose the faculty of hearing. Then it becomes necessary for God to speak to us in startling voices of judgment. Thus He speaks to sinners. His Voice leading His people onward is a Voice of tenderness and love, guiding us amidst difficulties. The more readily we obey, the more clearly will He make His Will to be known. We miss the articulateness of His revelations because we so often receive intimations without acting upon them.

We should always be careful to act, not because we think a thing to be right, but because we believe it to be the command of God. Let all our actions spring, not from an abstract sense of propriety, but from the utterance of a Personal God.

The Voice of God calls us to Himself as the true end of our being. God is Love. God speaks that we may love Him. God calls us to the obedience of love, to the joy of love. Every command of God's love which we have received with

loving obedience, will live on with the speciality of its own reward to the loving soul in an eternity of loving manifestation.

2. Revelation, since the Fall, is God's command ; for there is no Divine Truth which has not a practical consequence.

We are not required to know anything for the sake of knowing, but as a foundation of conduct, that we may know what God requires of us.

The more God speaks to us—the greater His revelation—so much the greater is our responsibility. The demand upon our memory, as the foundation of conduct, is proportionately great.

We have to act true to all those truths which Divine revelation sets before us, for they are the action of God Himself, as the Eternal Truth, in His own interior relationships, and in the exterior operations both of His providence and His grace. They are not abstract considerations, but active energies with which we must co-operate. We have to act subordinately to them while carrying out the purpose of our life, and we can only carry out that purpose truly while we call these powers into personal co-operation with ourselves. They are active round about us, and we have to act in our own spheres in such a manner that our own will may be identified with the Will of God which rules us in fellowship with them.

The more fully God reveals to us our position

in the scheme of His Divine government, the more does He require us to recognize all the spiritual surroundings which He reveals to us.

Every revelation of God is a revelation of power, and therefore of responsibility and of love. What is revealed to us in His Word is thus pregnant with command. It comes from the love of God, and calls us to love God. It shows us what God is, and what God does, and therefore it calls us to a reciprocal energy that we may be and do what is conformable to Him. He is the Source of our life. All that we are comes from Him. He is the only true End of our life. All that we are must be given to Him, to live in Him eternally.

3. Consider the importance of self-examination, and the measurement of our past conduct by the first law which we have received from God.

We have not merely to repent of breaches of God's commands, but also to form a habit of remembering them, and this is formed by seeing wherein we have violated them.

We need to consider what has been the practical effect of Divine Truth upon our conduct.

If I profess to believe this or that article of the faith, how has it affected my conduct?

Have I lived for God in memory of this law or this truth, so that God has been the End which has guided my life?

II. *Joy in Partnership with God.*

We are in all things fellow-workers with God.

1. He gave us our natural understanding, and He gives us also spiritual illumination.

The faculty of understanding makes our obedience to God an intelligent obedience, not merely an obedience to a fixed letter, slavish, ignorant; but a perception of fitness—a sense of duties as following upon certain relationships—an estimate of the relative importance of various things, some as ends and others as instruments.

This understanding is given to us by our regeneration in Christ. As Christ is the Wisdom of the Father, the Consubstantial Agent of all that the Father does, He reveals in us the Father's mind by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Man is therefore no longer left a slave to Satan under the tyranny of evil passions and brutish ignorance. He is called in all things to look up to his Father, to do whatsoever the Father doeth, *i.e.* whatever the Father calls him to do. Consequently, although he has received a fuller revelation of God's law than was given of old, he is called to act in obedience to God, with a filial intelligence. This gives dignity to life, and joy. We are to rise to higher wisdom by the exercise of intelligence, in union with the Divine wisdom.

“Give me understanding, and I will keep Thy law.”

We do not serve God merely under a law of penalty. We serve Him with hope, and therefore with spontaneity. God calls us to consider in what ways we may best correspond with His revealed purposes. He invites us onward by expectation of blessings in store. We are to grow to the acceptance of these blessings in the end by the exercise of our spiritual understanding in the use of what He has already given.

The understanding of all mysteries would be of no avail to us without charity, *i.e.* Divine Love. Our regeneration, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, our deliverance from the guilt of sin, our cleansing from its defilement, the renewal of our bodies to be worthy of God by the infusion of habits of holiness through the Body of Christ which is given to us, the washing of our souls by the incorruptible Blood of Jesus, by which the Divine virtues of His Soul are given to us as a principle of heavenly life, the knowledge of Jesus, as being thus to us the fundamental principle of righteousness, so that we may be made the righteousness of God in Him, the blessedness of a life hidden with Christ in God,—yes! all the articles of our faith are given to us that by devout meditation we may act in fellowship with God. Christ, the Wisdom of God, is made unto us wisdom, that our service may not

be the service of dull necessity, but of intelligent hope. We must be faithful in all that God has entrusted to us, to perform the duties of our natural position as His servants. But more than that. We must be watchful to turn every talent to good account, so that when Christ shall come again, He may receive His own with usury. He gives to each of us two talents—the powers of nature, and the powers of grace. We must use them in combination: grace sanctifying nature, nature giving manifestation to grace. If we are content in our own stupidity to think that God has only given us one talent, whether that one be nature or grace, we shall be cast out as unprofitable servants. No natural ability avails if it be used without the multiplying power of grace which gives it heavenly value. No gift of grace avails if it be cherished in empty self-conceit as raising us above the necessity of outward practice in the affairs of daily life.

If we use God's talents, we shall find that they become multiplied in the use. We thought we had two; we find we have five.

If we neglect God's talents, we shall find they dwindle down, so that when Christ comes again we shall only have the one gift, the gift of the natural man, to give to Him, and even that gift will be a dead gift.

Love is the life of the spiritual understanding,

and "he that loveth not, knoweth not God ; for God is Love." If we act with an understanding enlightened by God's Holy Spirit, we shall act as partners with God, rejoicing to do all things to His glory, and in the fellowship of His love.

2. How different it is for a son to work along with his father, from the mere drudgery of a slave ! Such is the difference between Christian illuminated obedience and Jewish compulsory submission.

We "have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." This is the spirit of sonship, and without the intelligence of sonship we cannot act true to our Christian calling.

Whatever a son does for his father's glory, he shares along with the father whom he glorifies. So was it with Christ glorifying God in the redemption of the world. So must it be with ourselves. We have to do all to the glory of God as His children, belonging to a higher world in which God's glory is manifested, and not merely to this outer world, in which so many clouds of sin obscure the glory of God. The glory of God which we share is the outcome of the Divine grace whereby He works within us. So must we act in the power of the Divine Sonship, the grace of the communicated Humanity of Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of the anointing Spirit.

"I come to do Thy Will, O my God : I am

content to do it ; yea, Thy law is within my heart."

Such is the joyous exclamation of the soul in doing God's Will, whether it involve more or less of suffering in the outer man. An act of filial obedience illuminated by the Holy Ghost must be an act of joy, for it calls the spirit of Divine adoption into outward act, and makes us feel the reality of our Divine life even whilst struggling against the difficulties of our transitory nature.

It is not wonderful that martyrs felt such joy in their sufferings as we know they often did feel, for the manifestation of the power of Divine Sonship will always be equal to the demand of the outward suffering ; and in proportion to the faith with which we accept such a dispensation of suffering for our Father's glory will be the manifestations of Divine grace glorifying us in Him.

Alas ! that we should have so little thought of the supernatural glory belonging to our Divine sonship !

We live in the gaslight of our earthly reason instead of the sunlight of our Father's glory ! So it is that we are content to live in the imprisonment of earthly proprieties, continually aiming at natural results, instead of welcoming Divine opportunities of sacrifice, and dying to natural desires that we may live to God.

III. Hopeful Action by Divine Inspiration.

“This is the will of God, even your sanctification.” This must be our will for ourselves ; and the will is no longer enslaved, as it was by the Fall.

It is our own fault if, after being regenerated by Christ, we allow ourselves to relapse into the bondage of the sinful will.

I. Grace has abounded through Jesus Christ, so that we are set free, and can walk in the power of the sanctifying Spirit.

The Holy Ghost quickens this will to desire things which are excellent. Heavenly objects shine out with Divine reality before the soul which really lives in the Divine adoption.

Things are real to us in proportion as we feel them to have a living power. Divine inspiration opens the soul to experience the living reality of the things of God. Then the soul must desire them. It can no longer desire anything else.

The soul while thus living for God does not sink into indifference by becoming dead to the world. No ! It rises up with an intense desire for those true objects which it contemplates. The desire is not a blank expectation, but an active anticipation. It is not a self-willed imagination, but an attentive contemplation. It looks forward for God to act according to the indications which God has given ; but it is always ready to surrender

one hope for another if God requires the abandonment of what seemed to be the promised joy. One hope may have to be given up after another, but the will remains only the more fervent in its hopefulness. A new and higher hope rises up before it. It never collapses in despondency, but it expands into the immensity of God's love.

So it is that by living solely for God we shall attain to desire nothing but God. That desire will not die out in unconsciousness, a dream, a Nirvana. It will live with the intenser joy, and contemplate the Eternal Wisdom from which all creation springs, the unfailing Love wherewith a continuous Providence leads it, the consummating Goodness whereby the soul which has longed for God shall find true bliss in the participation of His glory.

2. By the power of the Holy Ghost we act heartily, "as unto the Lord, and not unto men."

The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Love, and gives us a filial delight in all that is pleasing to God.

We "taste and see how gracious the Lord is," while we thus live in Him and for Him. By doing His Will the soul is absorbed into joyous union with Him, and learns to delight in Him, as He delights in us.

This is no unnatural elevation of spirit. The pleasure of serving God is a true pleasure, because it is the end for which man was created. Man

was created to serve God here, and to enjoy Him hereafter.

The love of God is the supernatural end of man, but it is not an end contrary to man's nature. It is the only end wherein man can find true happiness. By nature he falls short of this, having lost the sustaining power of God's fellowship by the sin of Adam. He is fallen from his true end. He cannot find any other end which shall take the place of God in Whose service he was originally formed to delight. All inferior ends disappoint him. Every sacrifice of the lower self to the glory of God, which is its true end, brings a joy which surpasses all things besides. It is only by such self-sacrifice that man can rise out of the fallen world to find the joy to which God calls him. Every faculty of his nature finds its true exercise in accordance with this law, for this was the original law of man's creation. He was formed to live for God, to serve God, to enjoy God. In the kingdom of grace all his nature must be consecrated to God according to this law. Grace calls us to attain that joy of which sin robbed us. It is the reiteration of the original law of man's happiness, and the communication of power to reach out after that happiness which, by reason of sin, had faded from our sight. To live for those objects which fallen nature desires is to go on stumbling in the blindness of our fallen estate, where every

transitory pleasure ends in disappointment. By the exercise of Divine love, leading us to serve God, man must attain to the true joy which God still sets before him. Grace illuminates the eye, strengthens the will, cheers the heart, informs the understanding, quickens the aspirations, perfects the endeavours, harmonizes the embarrassments of life, soothes its sorrows, mitigates its grievances, dignifies its sufferings, glorifies the victories of faith, and establishes the obedient soul in the grateful correspondence of the love of God.

3. The service of God is pleasurable, not merely because the things which God enjoins are pleasurable as results—that would be only an accidental, remunerative pleasure—but it is pleasurable in itself, intrinsically ; even though nothing seem to come of it. The act of service is pleasurable, because it is an act of love. It is only by obeying God, acting in submission to Him, that we can enjoy God. The act of Divine service, filial love, developed in the consciousness of union with God, is its own reward ; so is God truly the end of our being. We exist *for* Him—*i.e.* to serve Him and to enjoy Him, and to develop His indwelling power, and to rise to eternal, active, fruition of union with Him.

MEDITATION VI.

THE NECESSITY OF SERVING GOD.

All creatures serve God—some by necessity, some by will.

1. *The service of the mere natural world is by obedience to physical laws.*
2. *The service of animals is by instinct.*
3. *The service of man is by free will.*

Nevertheless we have to acknowledge a threefold necessity resting upon us—

*as men by creation,
as Christians by regeneration,
as Religious by profession.*

I. *The Laws of the Material World created by God.*

GOD might have created a world to be governed by quite other laws than those which we see in operation. He actually has done so. The spiritual world is quite different from the material world. Even within the cognizance of our senses, the inorganic, the vegetable, and the animal worlds are governed by laws which are quite distinct. In all probability there are many angelic hierarchies

existing by laws, as different from one another but superior to man, as these kingdoms of our terrestrial globe which are inferior to man.

The laws proper to each kingdom were not imposed upon God's legislative Will by any overruling force. He might, if He pleased, have created all things to act quite differently from what they do. He formed them out of nothing. They are nothingness, and have no power of resisting His Will. God is the only Substantive, Self-existing Power. His Power sustains all things in being, and if His Will were withdrawn, they would all relapse into the nothingness from whence they came.

God is changeless, and therefore the laws of creation are fixed. "They continue this day according to Thine ordinance : for all things serve Thee" (Ps. cxix. 91).

We can, however, perceive that there is a unity of purpose in creation. The laws of the several kingdoms of nature, though different, have a kindred character. They are graduated. The lower kingdoms contain, as it were, the types of the higher organizations. The outer world and its laws are summed up in man as the microcosm. All things seem to have been created with a view to man's necessities, and man is thus fitted to occupy the position assigned to him by revelation as the representative of God.

We know not what intelligences may operate

under the impenetrable veil of the material world, but whether in consciousness or unconsciousness, it is plain that they act with simple necessity. There is no exercise of will such as to cause any flaw in their obedience. They act with absolute uniformity, and although it seems more natural to think of God acting through intermediate intelligences than to think of Him as acting immediately upon unconscious matter, these intelligences are as nothing. They exhibit obedience to us with the most absolute stringency. They act irrespectively of all consequences. We can conceive of beings whose knowledge of God is different from our own who may also find their joy in thus simply executing fixed laws of the Divine Will, themselves receiving the Divine benediction and resting in the Divine love, although to us it may seem that their operations, lacking the element of choice, lose the delight which spontaneous action brings to us. Creation may be guided, for aught we know, by intelligences which are absorbed in a dignity of Divine contemplation, making the unswerving necessity of their self-surrender a sort of sacrament of Divine majesty which fills their whole being with love and praise.

II. *Instinct ruling the Actions of the Brute Creation.*

The animal world is scarcely more intelligible to us. We seem to see mysteries of creation

ruling them, and the sufferings which they bear imply some former age of moral discipline in which they have fallen under the power of evil. Their sufferings point back to a fall, and Holy Scripture bids us recognize them as sharing, in some degree, in the Divine purposes of man's redemption. They carry out the work which they have to do in a manner which puts our more imperfect obedience to shame. They act by instinct, and thus their works have a perfection higher than the works of man. Man acts under less completeness of Divine control, and therefore his acts partake of the blindness of our reason. Man has higher acts to accomplish, and larger instruments with which to work, but he acts in most things according to his own judgment, and without the perfection of instinct. We act by reason with a view to objects which the brute creation does not understand, but within the sphere of their own work they act under guidance of a Divine intelligence which we do not possess. In the higher probationary sphere of our intellectual life we are left to act with continual faultiness, and make progress by the experience of our own blunders.

We cannot behold the action of the brute creation without wonder at the extent of moral law which seems to pervade their life. This is more wonderful than the mechanical perfection of

their instinctive actions. They seem to know that they exist for the service of man, and they render that service at the cost of much suffering to themselves. They acquire faculties by discipline so as to be helpful to man in his works. Their brute power might make them entirely independent of man, and yet they cling to man as their master, and they look to man for the supply of their needs.

In this moral organization of the inferior races we see a great law of the universe which should make ourselves in like manner ready to accept controlling powers. Gifts, which God has bestowed upon us, should not make us feel that we can live to ourselves. We have our part to act in the economy of the universe. If we make the universe centre round ourselves, we lose our claim to the blessings for which it has been organized. The poor brute, whom we too often treat with cruelty and scorn, may teach us many lofty lessons of moral duty, if we will consider the powers of his instinct and the wonders of his submission. By his forgetfulness of self, he almost rises up to a fellowship of life with man, claiming and reciprocating our love. We must be true to the law of life in which God calls us to act. In serving God with true self-forgetfulness we rise up to the love of God. We become fitter for higher service, not by disdaining what God has given, or endeavouring to carry out our own self-will, but by the integrity

of self-sacrifice, doing everything that He alone may be glorified.

III. *Man's Service given to God as an Exercise of Free Will.*

In Paradise man was altogether free. The glory of the Divine Presence clothed him, inspired him, and shielded him. When he disobeyed God, it was by an act of his own free will, choosing the creature rather than the Creator. Adam was not deceived. He chose the joy of a dead world—to be dead along with the woman—rather than the promise of eternal life—to live along with God by fulfilling God's word.

Now it is otherwise. The nature of man has become enslaved to Satan. We have to resist the tyranny of Satan if we would serve God. But the law of nature is still the same. We have to choose the portion which we will have. Being enslaved under Satan, we have to choose amidst difficulties; but God gives grace to those who choose Him, so that we may not perish in the slavery belonging to the body of this death. If we come to Christ, we have life in Him.

We have therefore to serve God with our own will, although we are thus outwardly enslaved. The condition of slavery is what we cannot help, but we have to take part with God, and resist Satan, and God will help us.

Satan is the liar, the murderer who destroyed man by his deceit. We have to cling to the truth of God in spite of all the false appearances of the world ; and we must bear in mind the deceitfulness of Satan, who is always ordering the things of the world so as to ensnare those who would serve God.

We have not now to serve God in a world where His power is ruling all things to work along with us for His service ; on the contrary, the Prince of this World is the rebel whom we have to conquer, and he is always ordering the events of the world in antagonism to the people of God. God co-operates with us, not by omnipotent interventions staying the power of Satan, but by Providential interferences, overruling all things, so that Satan's antagonism may not hurt us, if we walk in the obedience of faith.

This leaves our service to be a real service of the whole nature, such as is suitable for man. It requires the surrender of our bodily nature to bear suffering in strife with the powers of evil. It necessitates the careful exercise of our intellectual nature, so that we may not trust in our own judgment, but may look to Him, seeking to know His will as it is revealed to our faith. Knowing the deceitfulness of Satan, we must keep ourselves aloof from the promises of the world by which he would keep us enslaved. Body and mind must both of them be given to God by an exercise

of the will. Our will is free, however much enthralled by outward bondage. We must direct our will to serve God in all things. We cannot be saved by any power outside of ourselves. God gives us grace, and this illuminates the mind, purifies the bodily emotions, and binds us to Himself.

Our nature was created for God, and nothing short of God can be our end. All the faculties of our nature must be gathered together so as to be directed to this one end. Every other aim not only distracts, but destroys. Our will must rule all, so as to present our whole being a living sacrifice to God, that we may give ourselves to Him, and may lay hold upon Him. The service must be complete. It must be continuous. The exercise of the will, in resisting temptations which would draw us away from God, develops an habitual exercise of grace by which we are strengthened to resist the powers of the enemy. As the soul is thus established in grace, it becomes fitted for the changeless fruition of God in eternity.

If the will had not to put away the immediate attractions of this deceitful world, and the sinful flesh, it would not be worthy of the truth, nor of the spiritual delights prepared for us in the realm of spiritual life. We cannot pass from one course of delights to another. We carry about with us the chains of habit, which link us either to earth or

heaven. If, therefore, we are bound by habitual exercise to worldly objects, we have not the capacity to rise at will, and find delight in heavenly things ; and, if our joy is in the service of God, we must hate the world, which is in rebellion against Him.

So is our life on earth a preparation for that which is to follow : effort must follow effort according to the law of grace. Then we shall find the efforts of time expand into the fulness of heavenly enjoyment, without losing the reality of individual consciousness. God requires our service, not merely as a Sovereign Ruler, but as a Moral Governor, leading us onward to the final issues of our predestination, according to the law in which He at the first created us. Our eternal joy is to be a voluntary joy, gladdening the whole nature : and therefore our preparatory service must be a voluntary service, yielding up the whole nature, with the continual exercise of our will delighting to act in His love. The Divine Love predestinates, creates, guides, strengthens, prepares, rewards. In the power of that Love we have to serve God, that we may experience His goodness, calling, sustaining, illuminating, protecting, chastising, cherishing, cheering, transforming, developing, remunerating. "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth ;" and we have to rise up to the truth of the filial service which we must render to Him with the integrity of an all-comprehensive will, such

as can seek no gratification outside of Him ; for our nature can have no true delight save in Him from Whom it came, for Whom it was formed, and in Whom alone it lives.

a. We are bound to serve God by creation. All our faculties are His gifts and must be used for His glory. Even in the natural cultivation of our powers we must fail if we are not directing them to Him. He gave us our faculties, including free-will, that we might yield to Him that loving service without which all we could do would count for nothing. He does not need the result of our actions ; but He desires the love of our hearts. If we give not to Him the love which He bids us offer, we cannot receive from Him that joy which His love communicates. Love must be reciprocal. Only by love can we serve God, for "God is Love."

b. We are bound to serve God by reason of our regeneration. Our natural will is dragged down to earth by many degrading appetites. We cannot really love anything which is of earth ; but we let ourselves be enchained by it so as not to love God. The Spirit of adoption, whereby we call God our Father, ought to lift us up to rejoice in the Love of God, and spurn all earthly delights. This gift of Divine Love brings with it the foretaste of eternal joy and the power of heavenly intentions. We are bound to act in the strength of this love.

As it associates us with God in a higher and closer relationship, it calls us to intenser self-surrender. By nature we may fail of grasping what Divine bounty sets before us, and yet we must sacrifice all earthly rivals, since there is nothing that can offer us more than a momentary satisfaction, and all the offers of the world are merely deceit. Regeneration, on the contrary, gives us the privilege of Divine Fellowship in the Holy Ghost as the starting-point of our life. Our will is fortified by this gift, unless we rebel against it. We must, therefore, rise up to the Divine call in the strength of the Divine life. Otherwise we put the powers of God in direct and immediate antagonism.

Antagonism to God as an act of our regenerate nature is much more terrible than it was in the feebleness of our earthly nature. Our Divine powers do not enable us to brave the external consequences of sin, as if we could in some way set them right. They only serve to associate us with the powers of Hell in our rebellion against God. We cannot obliterate them by neglecting them. We become identified with Satan, whom we ought by those powers to have conquered. The powers are abundantly sufficient for the purposes of our struggle. If we suffer Satan to gain the victory, it is because our will has not been true to God. Grace does not act as a substitute for human effort, but it strengthens for all the demands of God, if our

will remains true to Him in the exercise of grace.

c. The Religious is specially bound to the service of God by Religious Profession. The acknowledgment of a Divine vocation is an avowal of the obligation which may be less clearly perceived in the ordinary paths of Christian life. The Profession does not take the place of the continual surrender of the will, but it should be the basis of a continuous action. What is professed at one moment must stand out before the heart as a law to be perpetually called into operation. The Professed bears witness against himself to the truth of all God's claims upon him. Whatever blessing God may bestow upon the Professed in the covenant by which the will has surrendered itself to God, is a strength, and an additional gift of close fellowship with God, by which the soul is pledged to Holy Love. The gift is an entire gift, a voluntary gift, a perpetual gift, a responsible gift.

The service of God in Heaven is voluntarily assumed by the Professed as the law of service to which he is pledged on earth.

MEDITATION VII.

LIFE OF SELF-OBLATION.

We have to serve God by consecrating ourselves to Him, reaching out after Him, and finding Him.

I. Sacrifice an Act of Communion with God in Love.

THIS is the true character of sacrifice. We are too apt to think of sacrifice as if it meant death—losing something of value. But no ; sacrifice is the attainment of true life. In a *state of sin* it means death—death to sin. But in its truth it means life—rejoicing in the life of God.

1. Sacrifice is the act whereby we approach and dwell in communion with God.

It is the gift of ourselves to God.

Such a gift cannot be given by the creature as such, for every creature belongs to God by nature already, and has no free will wherewith to give or withhold himself from the Divine service. Such a gift implies the free spirit of sonship, capable of glorifying God by spontaneous

effort as well as by the obligations of necessary obedience. It implies an originative faculty of service within the creature, a free will to choose the higher modes of voluntary service, an inspiration to make that choice with intelligence so that it may be fitting for each one in its issues, a Divine power so that the act may be worthy of God's acceptance, a living fellowship in spiritual love by the bond of the Holy Ghost ; so that in rendering this homage the creature partakes of the glory of God, and by losing its natural infirmities in the Divine welcome, finds its true supernatural triumph in the Divine glory.

2. The one perfect gift is the perfect Sacrifice of Him Who ever lives, giving Himself in our Nature unto the Father.

a. No one can give himself to God, but by the power of the Holy Ghost.

It was by the power of the Holy Ghost that the Son of God took upon Himself our nature ; and so by the power of the Holy Ghost He gives Himself in that nature to the Father.

As He ever dwells in the Unity of the Father's Substance, so He gives His Human Nature perfectly to the Father, by the Consubstantial Spirit which dwells in His Manhood.

Adam had a promise of immortality if he did not transgress the command of God ; but Adam had no power to do God any service by which he could

merit to attain to a higher order of creation than that in which he was created. The powers of his nature, even though the Spirit of God dwelt within him and glorified his outward form, could never rise up above the sphere of humanity. Any elevation to which he might look forward by God's promise could only be God's pure and unmerited gift. The power which should raise him up above himself must be a power originating from above himself.

God the Son came into the world by the power of the Holy Ghost, and as He dwelt in the Unity of the Divine Nature, He acted in the power of the Divine Nature even when acting in the feebleness of man's nature. The outer feebleness did not destroy the personal omnipotence belonging to Him as the Son of God. His acts had an inalienable merit, surpassing any perfection of human substance. The Substance of the Godhead lifted Him up into the eternal life and fellowship of the Divine Glory. What was wrought in the power of the Holy Ghost, proceeding from Him in all He did, was worthy of the Father's acceptance in the fellowship of the same undivided Spirit of Life.

Having assumed a created nature, He gave that nature to God in all the perfection of that life of eternal love wherein He ever lives with God. This He could do, being equal with God and consubstantial, but no created being could do, not being of one substance with the Father.

b. This act of sacrifice began with the first moment of His Incarnation, and it constitutes the reality of His glorified life at God's Right Hand for ever.

As the Holy Ghost dwells in His Manhood, He is continually by the power of the Holy Ghost giving Himself to God.

The gift is a *perfect* gift by reason of this anointing Spirit, anointing Him not externally, so as to complete the imperfect action of a created will, but internally, so as to initiate the action of His Human Will. By the Holy Ghost He took our nature with a human will as its prerogative ; and by the same Holy Ghost He exercises that will now that He has assumed it. His Human Will never acts but under the influence of this Anointing Spirit ; and therefore His Human Will is always active towards God and true to God.

The gift of Himself could not be a transitory act accomplished in a moment of time. A gift to the Eternal must have the acceptance of the Eternal, and live with the life of the Eternal. A gift of the whole created universe would be no gift to God. It would be merely a thing of death, unless by being given it were taken up into the life of the Eternal ; but no one could give anything so as to be taken up into the Eternal, unless the giver had eternal life in Himself, by which the gift should be made worthy of the Receiver.

It is quite a mistake to think of Sacrifice as a penalty imposed by God in order to obtain pardon for sin. It is, on the contrary, a privilege which shows that God accepts the offer as being worthy of fellowship with Himself.

The sacrifices offered by the law were no true sacrifices acceptable to God. The victim lost his life, not because God had pleasure in the death of a sinner, or of the victim which was his representative for the occasion. His losing his life showed that God did not accept him. The victim was a type of the true Sacrifice Who, though passing through death according to the penalty which belonged to a world under Satan's dominion, would nevertheless not lose His Life by dying. All the Mosaic sacrifices whose blood was sprinkled upon the Veil, were, so to speak, tentative offerings. The sprinkling was to show whether the sprinkled blood had within it the Life which could claim access to the Mercy Seat, so that the Veil should be withdrawn. God could not accept what was dead. Those sacrifices were of no avail to put away sin, not having Divine Life.

They pointed to One Who should enter into the Holiest with His own Blood, acceptable to God because living with God in the power of the Holy Ghost, although His earthly nature passed through death to escape from Satan's tyranny, bruising the serpent's head in the triumphant struggle. The

Blood of Jesus admits us to the Holiest, not because it satisfies a necessary penalty, but because it satisfies the requirements of Divine Love, and is glorious, worthy to be accepted of God, by reason of the immortality which it enshrines. The Blood of Jesus does not satisfy the Divine Justice because it is offered under an infinity of pain, such as an angry God would demand, but because it cannot be robbed of its vitality by all the violence of Satan, who has the power of death whereby to claim the soul of man as his slave. It lives with the power of the indwelling Spirit, and by that life-giving Spirit this precious Blood is worthy to be the instrument of regenerating grace to all who are baptized into His Body. He has the power of making His members partakers of the privilege of communion with Divine Life, which is His own prerogative of eternal generation.

He is the Saviour of all who come unto God by Him, not because He died upon the Cross to pay a penalty which they could not pay, but because, although He laid down His Life upon the Cross, He ever liveth to make intercession for us in virtue of that Eternal Spirit which the death upon the Cross could not make Him forfeit. He died indeed upon the Cross for our redemption, but not as exempting us from a penalty of the future. Although He died, we have still to pass through that outward death through which He passed.

That penalty is not remitted. He died as exercising a prerogative of eternal Life, that we, who are now dead in trespasses and sin, might live with Him eternally, being accepted of God in the virtue of that Eternal Spirit whereby we are reborn unto holiness in Him, so as to hold communion with the Father.

Jesus at the Right Hand of God is always exercising this prerogative of Divine Sonship. He is always giving himself to God. He does not merely exist in our manhood because there is no power to rob Him of His glory. The glory of His Manhood consists in His continual giving of Himself to God, the act of filial homage whereby He is ever clinging with His Human Will to the Divine Substance, and rejoicing to be upheld in the Divine Glory by the action of Eternal Love.

3. By the same Holy Ghost He calls us to give ourselves to the Father, as His Members, living with His Life, and having our will united to His will as the moving power.

Our sacrifice can have no perfection through the human will, but it has perfection by the grace of Christ. He gives Himself *in us* to the Father, as He first of all gave Himself *for us*. It is the reward of His original Self-oblation, that He now has power to give eternal life to all His members ; and eternal life consists in the power of self-oblation to God by the Holy Ghost.

As He is the Head and we are the members of His Body, we are called to take part in this perpetual Sacrifice. No external ceremony can set forth the Sacrifice of Christ as an act belonging to the past. By the Sacraments of grace we are called to live in the power of that heavenly act of Self-oblation which Christ is carrying on for Himself and for us who live with Him in the unity of the Holy Ghost. This is our Eucharistic Sacrifice, in which we give God thanks for acceptance in Christ as often as we feed upon His Body and Blood. That Food is not lifeless food given from heaven to us as children of earth. It is the Food of eternal Life which, as we feed thereon, lifts us up to share in the Self-oblation of Christ. We have to offer up ourselves, our souls and bodies, in union with His ever-living Self-oblation. That Oblation is a power which operates through all the members of His Body as often as they feed upon Him. It is an act which commemorates the death of Christ, not as a transaction completed in ages past upon the Cross, but as the triumphant initiation of a glorious power to be evermore communicated from Himself in the covenant of Eternal Life.

As Christ is perpetually glorifying the Father by His presentation of His Manhood for the mediatorial purposes of the Heavenly Kingdom, so He is being perpetually glorified upon the Throne of God whenever the faithful feed upon

Him and drink that Life of the Spirit which His precious Blood conveys. That Blood makes His glory to shine forth continually in our infirmity. We are taken out of ourselves. We live with His Life. It is a holy inebriation whereby we are lifted out of this world of death, and are transformed, as we drink thereof with lively faith, into the glory of the Heavenly Jerusalem wherein we are new-born. Unless we feed on this Heavenly Food we cannot either give the glory to Jesus, or receive it from Him. As we feed thereon, so must there be a perpetual act of faith, whereby we call forth His power to transport us from sin to holiness, that the Life whereby He gives Himself to God may be in us a perpetual principle of self-oblation and Divine acceptance.

II. *The Perfection of the Self-oblation of Christ.*

As His gift is perfect by reason of the *power* whereby He gives it, so also it is perfect *in itself*—an object worthy of the Father's acceptance.

I. Being conceived by the Holy Ghost, His Human Nature was spotless from the very first instant of His being. The Holy Spirit of Life separated Him as a Living Substance from all mankind, whose substance He bore. He was One with them in the substance of humanity;

but separate from them, as having the Life of God in that Humanity.

The Life of God was not merely *united* with that Humanity in companionship, however close. In Him *dwelt* all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. All the perfection of our Nature, as created in God's image, remained in Him. Nothing that sin has introduced into our nature was found in Him, no corruption of death, no blindness—no finite thought of Self, holding Him back from God as we are held ; no seeking of satisfaction in anything outside of God. His Human Nature was perfect from the very first instant, with all the living perfection proper to it by God's Will ; and His Human Nature developed in manifold perfection with every act of life, according to the law of growth which was proper to it by God's predestination.

Thus it was perfect in the first moment of His Conception—perfect as He grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man—perfect in its complete development, by action and suffering, when He could say upon the Cross, "*Consummatum est !*" Thus the Humanity He gave was in itself a Perfect Gift, worthy of God the Son to give, and of God the Father to receive, in the power of the Holy Ghost.

2. That Humanity He still gives to the Father by His perpetual presentation of Himself in Heaven, and He gives it by the communicated

extension of His Glorified Substance in us His members.

We do not give our imperfect nature to be made perfect by His added perfections, but we give Him to the Father *in ourselves*. His Perfect Nature takes the place of that imperfect and corrupt humanity which belongs to us as the children of Adam. It is His offering though by our hands, His Substance in our emptiness, His Vital Perfections in our natural deadness. We give not our natural selves, but Him alone in all His perfection, dwelling within us—our true supernatural self, whose perfection quickens with Divine worthiness the acts of all His members, wrought by the inspirations of His Holy Spirit, and the corresponding obedience of faith. His perfection does not *gild* our actions : it *inspires* them.

III. *Our Oblation of Christ in ourselves to God.*

The worthiness of Christ's Oblation, as we present Him in our actions to God, is not a measurable value making up for our imperfections. It is a transforming power which glorifies them. The faithful are not accepted of God in spite of their unworthiness. They are delivered from this unworthiness in order that in Christ's life they may be found worthy of that acceptance which belongs to Him.

Our life is prolonged for us upon earth in order that Christ may be formed within us ; but this can only be in proportion as our own individual lives perpetuate His Self-oblation. We must die to sin as He did, and live to God as He lives. That Divine Love, which was the law of His Life, must be the law of our lives also. That zeal for the glory of God, which stirred His Heart, must stir our hearts also. That hatred of sin, wherein He conquered Satan, must operate within us, that we may take up our cross, and win the victory, in like manner. That deadness to the world, wherein He lived, must make us in like manner indifferent to external accidents, setting no value upon anything save as an instrument of heavenly power. All the germs of holy life, which were developed in the meritorious actions of His three and thirty years, must be accepted by us as infusing into ourselves those habits of holiness which are derived from Him, and make us like to Him.

So must we, in every thought and word and act, present Christ in ourselves to God as our only and all-sufficient Saviour ; and we must grow in the experience of that saving power by the very act of continually presenting Him. As we call upon God to behold Christ in ourselves, and accept us in Him, we must grow in conformity of life to Him. We cannot ask God to accept Christ in ourselves, save as we are cultivating that indwelling

Presence which we present. Our law of life can no longer be the law of a merely external command. It must be the law of "the engrafted Word," the Word made Flesh, Who has united us to Himself in His holy Self-oblation to the Father: the law of liberty, of Divine sonship, of eternal communion with God, not merely seen as in a mirror, but quickening the heart, that as we give ourselves to God, we may be blessed in the deed (James i. 21-25).

MEDITATION VIII.

THE SERVICE OF GOD.

We must present ourselves, body, soul, and spirit, a living sacrifice to God, in union with Christ.

OUR life in God is ruled by three relationships of the Blessed Trinity, into Whose Life we are admitted. The faculties of our nature—memory, understanding, will—correspond with the Three Divine Persons. And the service of God requires the *oblation* of these three faculties. Man cannot serve God without their full exercise.

The one perfect Sacrifice of Christ is perpetuated in us as His members—so that *our* oblation of ourselves has a principle of perfection, being offered not merely in the corruption of our fallen nature, but in the life of His mystical body Whose members we are.

We must therefore be careful to present Christ in ourselves. For this purpose we feed upon Him in the Holy Eucharist, wherein His glorified Humanity is communicated to us who were made

His Members in Holy Baptism; and we are required to present Him in ourselves in every act we do, if we would continue in Him; for this indwelling Presence is an active, sanctifying Presence.

So we must present Him in our *body, soul* and *spirit*.

I. The Presentation of Christ in our Bodies.

1. Our *bodies* are to be made clean by His Body.

a. Baptism conveys forgiveness, but continual Eucharists communicate the cleansing, healing power, by which our regenerate nature becomes increasingly separated from the corruption of evil tendencies inherent within us, and the renewed Humanity of Christ is extended towards us. He thus takes us increasingly into union with Himself as the Resurrection and the Life, while we feed upon Him day after day. So are our sinful bodies made clean by His Body. Strength is given to us to mortify our carnal will, and we feed upon His renewing glory by faith.

b. We have, therefore, to present Christ in ourselves to the Father; that we may resist temptation whenever it assails our bodies, and that we may die more and more to all that is of earth; so that we may be stablished and built up in Christ, and Christ may be perfectly formed within us to the

glory of God the Father. We receive Christ completely at every Communion, but each Communion ought to add to our hold on Him. The habits of grace have to be perfected by repeated acts of faith, and by repeated communications of Christ's Body as the restorative principle. Absolution does not admit of degrees, but communion with Christ must be perfected more and more, until He comes to take our bodies out of the grave, claiming as His own that renewed humanity wherein we belong to Him ; and putting away from us for ever that sinful flesh, to which we have all the life long been dying. So shall death be swallowed up in victory, and we shall know Him to be the Resurrection in Whom we have been made complete ; although during all our life we have been so miserably held down by Satan's power, exerted through the corrupt habits of our fallen nature.

c. So we have to give our bodies a sacrifice to God, laying hold upon the One Victim Who alone has the right to approach God. He presents us to God as Joseph presented his sons to Jacob ; and we must present Him in ourselves to God, for we cannot otherwise find acceptance.

This gift of ourselves is a real gift. If we give ourselves to God's glory, we must not imagine that we are giving ourselves to Him for our own satisfaction in what He will do for us. To offer ourselves to Him with the intention of looking to Him to be

sheltered from all difficulty, is to claim His protection, but it is in no sense of the word a gift. We must give ourselves to Him that He may do with us what He pleases, use us for His own glory, in whatever way He may see fit.

We are not to think that by reason of our self-oblation He will set us free from bodily pain. On the contrary, as Christ suffered in the flesh, so must we look upon bodily suffering as a special means whereby God will claim us as His own.

Suffering is the exertion of Satan's hatred against mankind, because God has created man to be his conqueror. We must expect Satan to bruise our heel if we are to have our part in the victory which the Seed of the woman has won. As Satan fought against Christ, so he will make war against the remnant of the woman's seed from age to age, *i.e.* all the members of Christ, the members of the Church Militant, "which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. xii. 17). Nevertheless, "the God of peace shall bruise Satan under our feet shortly" (Rom. xvi. 26). Only we must go on suffering: and we cannot hope to have our victory until all our "fellow-servants also, and our brethren" in the strife with Satan shall "be fulfilled" (Rev. vi. 11). Suffering in the flesh is the law by which we are to cease from sin. Sin is the glorification of the flesh, and we are not struggling against sin unless the

flesh is being mortified. We do not gain holiness merely by being sheltered from sin, when there has been no act of the will choosing God's service in preference to sinful indulgence. If we give ourselves to God we must expect Him to put the reality of our self-oblation to the test. So we see it in the typical history of Job. We must indeed count it all joy to fall into manifold temptations, because all such suffering is a token of God's accepting Love, and God is glorified thereby.

If we give ourselves to God, we may be quite sure that Satan will not suffer us to be simply withdrawn from his power without having the reality of our self-oblation fully proved. It is Satan who causes the suffering. God strengthens us with His grace that we may bear the suffering.

Our suffering may be continuous without being violent: or again, it may be violent at times, while yet we have long intervals of apparent freedom. Satan leaves us undisturbed sometimes, in order that by a sudden onslaught he may find us unprepared. Sometimes, indeed, our suffering may be both violent and continuous. We are not to think that God deals hardly with us in allowing Satan to assail in such a way. God always gives us the necessary grace to meet the sufferings, and we must be watchful so as to use the grace immediately upon the outburst of the enemy's violence. We must never forget that it is a token of God's

acceptance that He permits us thus to suffer. As God gives us grace according to every occasion, so we grow in holiness by repeated exercise of the grace which He gives. We cannot grow in holiness without such suffering as may exercise our will, that we may give ourselves cheerfully to God for Him to use us for His own glory.

But our bodies must be specially tempted by those forms of suffering which are inherent within ourselves by reason of our sinful conception. The flesh is the great instrument whereby Satan holds us under his slavery. Our sinful appetites will surely be a constant source of suffering if we resist them in the power of grace. Evil desires inherent in the original sinfulness of our fallen nature are aggravated by manifold acts of sinful indulgence in which from time to time we have yielded ourselves to the tempter.

We are not to think that God rejects us because such passions may continue to harass us with terrible tyranny. God knows that Satan stirs them up, and He sees whether we are striving to subdue them. They are not sinful in themselves if we are continually mortifying them. On the contrary, as they serve more than any other kind of temptation to humble, they may be made by God's sustaining grace greatly conducive to our sanctification. We have to live for God, and not for ourselves. The Body of Christ is a living

power within us, and when our sinful appetites rouse us to evil desires, we must call the energies of the Body of Christ to be our strength and our shield. He suffered in every way that we can suffer. He conquered. He is able to strengthen for victory all who will use His grace, even under the most violent assaults of the Evil One. We belong to God by the regenerating grace of Christ. We have given ourselves to God. Satan claims us ; but if we be true to this self-oblation in Christ, Satan cannot prevail.

II. *The Presentation of Christ in our Souls.*

We have to present our *souls* a sacrifice to God in the same way.

a. Our souls—with all their desires and ambitions, naturally looking to this evil world. Being dead with Christ, and raised in Him, we must present our souls, no longer caring for the things of this world, but fixed with earnest desire upon the glory of God. The Life is in the Blood. The pure Blood of Christ which we drink in Holy Communion must be the Principle of Divine calmness and holy joy for souls. So shall our souls be washed in His most precious Blood ; not alone externally by the forgiveness of sins, but internally by elevation out of the power of sin—

elevation into the fellowship of Christ in His holiness.

b. We must present His Soul in our souls as the true Petitioner. What He desires, we desire. We can desire nothing else. Our soul looks upon the Throne of God, and longs for Christ to be manifested in the glory of His Kingdom, when we shall be one Body and one Soul indissolubly. Now we are all liable to be separated from Him by earthly desires. We must put them ever away; but every desire that we put away must be met by a gift of Divine satisfaction, according to the desires of the Soul of Christ for us.

We must consider the Personal Love which Jesus has for every one of our souls. He desires to be glorified in every one of us. Upon the Cross He pleaded for every one who should be united to Him in the glory of His Resurrection: and now at the Right Hand of God He rejoices to give forth from Himself manifold gifts of renewing grace according to our several necessities.

How we should value the Blood of Christ when we receive it in Holy Communion, if we did at all realize the joy which Jesus at the Right Hand of God experiences in thus giving Himself to every communicant! For all He triumphed upon the Cross. To each he gives Himself as a personal power of grace in Holy Communion. His Soul is in that triumphant Blood which He presents

ever-living to the Father: and He finds the satisfaction of His heavenly Life in giving forth those sanctifying powers which are inherent within Him. As our sinful habits are derived from the sin of Adam's soul, so the All-holy Soul of Christ rejoices, by the power of the Holy Ghost, to infuse living principles of holy life into each one of us, as we are made to drink into the one Spirit of Life wherein He is glorified.

We then give ourselves to God in Christ, and the Soul of Christ gives us to God in union with Himself. Marvellous is the joy of the Divine mystery! We must so associate ourselves with Christ in the gift that we may appropriate the necessary strength. The co-operation of Christ as our ever-living Sacrifice is sure. It is our own part which is so lamentably deficient. We do not realize His Mediation. We do not realize our own sonship. We do not realize the glory of God the Father, as it is shown forth in us by the Spirit of His Son working along with us for our sanctification. We communicate, and return to our own thoughts and our own ways, instead of rising up to God as the members of the High Priest enthroned at His Right Hand in the fulness of power.

c. As we put away earthly desires, we find our desires for heavenly things continually increasing and continually satisfied. "He that drinketh of Me shall yet be thirsty." The Blood of Christ

transports us into a higher region of delight. It takes us out of ourselves by a holy inspiration ; and that, not for a transitory excitement, but for an abiding growth of heavenly illumination and experience.

As He desires our sanctification by raising us out of the desires of this sinful world, so we must seek to be sanctified by rising up to the desires of the heavenly glory, wherein the Soul of the All-holy Mediator rejoices.

We are apt to forget the joy of our Lord's Human Soul now in His mediatorial glory. That joy is a joy as true, as the sorrow of His Passion was true while He was upon the earth. At the Right Hand of God He is not pleading as a Suppliant. All power is already given to Him in Heaven and on earth. He is, however, continually desiring the completeness of His Kingdom, and He is giving forth the gifts of glory, treasured up within Himself, to each one of His people as we come to the Father pleading in His Name. He rejoices in the exercise of His glory by every gift wherewith He strengthens His people. His glory shines out continually more and more as they are sanctified one by one, and are called into His rest. He is looking forward to be glorified in His people collectively when the Holy City shall descend out of Heaven from God. In all use of Sacraments we ought to bear in mind this joyous fellowship of our ascended

Lord personally delighting in us. His Soul rejoices along with our soul while He enables us to draw near to the Father.

III. The Presentation of Christ in our Spirit.

a. We must offer to God that spiritual nature which died in Adam, but is renewed in us by regenerate life in the Holy Ghost.

b. The Holy Ghost not only wakens our souls to desire higher things than nature desires ; but He enables us to offer ourselves to God in the fellowship of the Divine Life, and to yield ourselves up to the discipline of God's Holy Love, whereby He would perfect us for His own acceptance.

We do not offer ourselves to God in the deadness of nature, but in the power of that Eternal Spirit which rests upon us in the Body of Christ. This is the Spirit of Holy Unction rising up from the inmost depth of our souls, as sanctified in Christ, and making the Christ-life effectual within us, that we may plead Christ's merits. We could not plead the merits of Christ if we had not the personal co-operation of the Holy Ghost : for it is by the Holy Ghost that the life of Christ flows on to us. All the mediation of Christ is exerted only by the power of the Holy Ghost, as the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity anointing His Manhood.

This Holy Spirit opens our eyes to see the things

of Christ, and unites our souls to His Soul that we may desire them. We must always, therefore, be careful to draw near unto God, giving up ourselves to Him in the strength of the Holy Spirit restored to us in Christ, and making us worthy to be accepted in the Beloved.

MEDITATION IX.

UNION WITH CHRIST.

Our body and soul are renovated by the communication of His Glorified Body and Blood, to strengthen and cleanse.

I. *Personal Union.*

“WE in Him, and He in us.” This is the work of the Holy Ghost Who proceeds from Him, and quickens His ascended Being with the fulness of Divine Life. As He in His Divine Glory acts for His Body towards the Father in the Unity of the Holy Ghost, so by the same Spirit He acts towards us as His Members, lifting us up into the fellowship of His Divine Life.

Christ, the Head, is the central principle of Divine Life towards those who are united with Him.

His glorified Humanity does not exist at the Right Hand of the Father by an external necessity, as things of earth exist in this or that place because they happen to be there. His glorified existence

is an existence of moral power, dependent upon His exaltation by the Will of the Father, but also demanding the submissive co-operation of His own Human Will. The nature and operation of the Manhood are not lost by being exalted. They receive spiritual power greater than is compatible with earthly existence; but the power whereby He rejoices to be exalted, requires a co-operation of His own Will, accepting the exaltation, and clinging to that Divine glory which is its Blessed Portion.

Since God created man in His own image with the gift of a will, so that man's service to God should be a voluntary service, it follows that every development of human nature shall be a development of the human will. By the co-operation of the Anointing Spirit, the will acquires a power of appropriating that which is beyond the natural grasp. So the will of the Humanity, in the Person of Christ glorified, acquires a capacity of receptivity whereby it rejoices to accept, retain, and exercise all the glory of the exaltation to God's Right Hand whereto the predestination of the Father has raised it. He dwells in God by His Human Will, as God dwells in Him by the sustaining power of the Holy Ghost proceeding from His Divine Person.

We must think of the exaltation of Christ as the consummation of that glory in which we ourselves

are called to share. There must be on our part, a co-operation of the human will, choosing God by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, that we may abide in Christ.

We have to exercise this inspired will amidst all the difficulties of our earthly position. In all our temptations we must choose to dwell in God by the power of the Holy Ghost. This is one part of the value of our life of temptation. It forces us to exercise the gift of the Holy Ghost as the inspiring principle of our will ; and by this act of choice we abide in God, and become partakers of His glory. This is not effected by transitory acts, but by habitual perseverance. We must never look forward to a life of Divine glory without a correspondent human activity. We cannot imagine to ourselves what the action of the glorified life shall be. We in this world of evil only know what action is as being in struggle with the evil around us. Hereafter we shall choose Divine Goodness, and the human action will be none the less because the discipline of suffering, incident to a world of evil, will then be over. The present discipline is preparing us for that future energy. The Passion of Christ prepared His Humanity for that correspondence with the Divine Activity wherewith it is now glorified at the Right Hand of God. The discipline is preparatory to the joy, fitting us to receive what otherwise we should be

unable to exercise. We must be strengthened in our thankful acceptance of all earthly suffering, whether by temptation from within, or by violence from without, by remembering that we are thus being perfected for that glorious participation in the exaltation of Christ, to which God is calling each one of Christ's members.

He presents Himself on behalf of all His Body to the Father. He is glorified in their glory.

This constitutes His perpetual intercession, so that He communicates to us individually that glory whereinto He entered at His Resurrection and Ascension. All glory in heaven and earth were then *given* to Him.

That glory is now *communicated* from Him to His members, by reason of His perpetual action towards the Father as the God-Man, His Human Will acting in the Glory of the Triune Will wherein He is exalted to God's Right Hand. He is not praying for us in order that He *may receive* something for us, but He is interceding for us in order that what He *has received* may, by that action of His glorified Will, come forth to each one of us as His members. His Human Will acts in subordination to His Divine Will, so as to be the instrument of His Divine power to communicate all the glory which He has in Himself, according to the needs of His people that are still upon the earth. When we feed upon Him we put ourselves in

connection with His Intercessory Will, and call forth His glory.

This constitutes our Eucharistic Sacrifice—not an external substitution of Christ for ourselves, but an organic fellowship of action with Him, as the Mediatorial principle of new life. His glory fills our prayer with the unfailing power of His own Divine merit.

Christ does not act for Himself, and leave us to act along with Him for ourselves. He is the Head. Every act of His affects all of His members. His living Will calls forth the co-operation of His members; and He does not gain something for Himself which He may subsequently give over to them, but what He possesses as His own, He possesses and uses in common with them.

His fruition of the Divine glory, His exercise of power at the Right Hand of God, is therefore not a partitive acquisition, but a vital unitive identification with all His members. We feed upon Him by being associated with Him in this Divine power. He does not act by instrumental interposition at the Right Hand of God, but by the perfection of corporate life. Our acts of worship upon the earth are not done for the purpose of bringing Him into outward proximity to our earthly nature, but for the purpose of developing within us the glory of His heavenly action, which is the vital principle underlying the earthly nature

of His members ; and so we feed upon Him, not as Food given from without, but as an upspringing source of inexhaustible nourishment. He Himself describes the gift as being in each one of His members "a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (S. John iv. 14). Therefore, when we feed upon Christ, we must realize His heavenly glory in all His Mediatorial action as being given to us to nourish us by reason of the heavenly identity of spiritual capacity whereby we are one with Him on Whom we feed. We cannot feed upon Christ except as having Christ already within ourselves. So it is that an unbaptized person cannot partake of Christ in the Holy Communion. The Holy Eucharist was ordained as the means by which the members of Christ upon the earth should participate in that continual Self-oblation of Christ in Heaven, whereby He is ever giving Himself to God to rejoice in Him, and God is ever glorifying Him by the ceaseless communication of His Divine glory to welcome in Fatherly love the Manhood of His Only-begotten Son. We do not feed upon the glorified Manhood of Christ as an object external to God, but as the substance of our regenerate being, which is ever living with a Divine activity, and communicates himself to us to nourish us in the fellowship of that Divine communion. As members of the Incarnate Son, feeding upon His glorified Humanity, we

partake of that Heavenly Communion, whereby Christ our Head is actively participating in the glory of the Father.

Thus do we upon earth share in the glorious Sacrifice which Christ, our Head and High Priest, is ever presenting in the heavenly glory.

II. The Substantial Self-communication of Christ to us.

We dwell in Him, and our life in Him is nourished and perpetuated, while we receive His Substantial Presence into ourselves, to fill up our emptiness, to heal our corruption, to enlighten our blinded faculties, to enrich us with the powers of grace, to clothe our nakedness with the radiance of His glorified Being.

We lose ourselves by dwelling in Him. We are taken into His Ascended Being, so as to develop the germs of Ascended Life which were implanted within us by our Regeneration in Baptism. We are quickened by the Consubstantial Spirit, so as to have our part in all that He is and in all that He does. Our affections lay hold upon His organic Headship by the power of the same Spirit.

Our hopes are exalted with earnest desire for the glory of God to be manifested outwardly—"Hallowed be Thy Name," and for this Heavenly Kingdom to be completed—"Thy Kingdom come,"

and for the power of the sanctifying Spirit to overcome all the sluggishness and carnality of His members upon earth—"Thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven."

The act of communion with Christ is not an act producing merely an individual result. If our hearts rise up to God in Christ, as they ought to do, in Holy Communion, they must also expand so as to include all the sympathies of Christ's mystical Body. We can no more live by a separated individuality of spiritual fellowship with Christ, than a finger can live if separated from the life of the hand to which it belongs. Vital action necessarily permeates the whole frame, and the vitality of Divine Love necessarily acts, in every member of Christ's Body, with unbroken fellowship towards all the rest.

Hence the great requirement of the faithful communicant "to be in charity with all men." This is not merely to have external human friendship, according to the requirements of natural courtesy, but it is to have the vital fellowship of Divine Love, as a principle of active relationship towards all. The act of Christian Oblation cannot be drained into any limited channel. The whole Body of Christ must participate in every act whereby any faithful communicant participates in the action of Christ the Head.

We find our hearts enlarged towards all Christian

people as being members of one Living Body. The unity of Christ's Church is not the mere outward agreement of kindred religionists, but the organic unity of His Body wherein we rejoice.

Our efforts are put forth in continual prayer for His Body. We cannot dwell in Him unless we are pleading habitually for all His members, so that the glory of His intercession may operate towards them all through us. We dwell in Him not by a mere selfish satisfaction, or insensible adhesion, but by a vital sympathy with His members in all their needs, and with Himself as rejoicing to supply those needs. This sympathy must act in large-hearted energy, acting towards all because Christ is in all.

Being in Him, we long for the completion of the number of His elect. The final perfection of Christ's Body must be the absorbing law of our life. Hence zeal for missions. We must rejoice to fill up what remains of His sufferings, that His Church militant may attain to the completeness of the victory of faith, overcoming the world. Every suffering must be accepted as the means whereby God would beat down Satan under our feet, and so bring Christ's victory to its final completeness of triumphant acknowledgment. Satan assails us, as dwelling in Christ. We must meet him by the power which our dwelling in Christ assures to us.

III. Our Elevation by the Renewed Gift of Christ.

Christ dwells in us by renewed communications of His Glorified Humanity and by the Personal co-operation of the Holy Ghost, proceeding from Himself as our Head. He has experienced all of our temptations, and conquered them. He rejoices to give to us the special grace which He knows to be necessary in order that we may rise up to the requirements of His Body, and triumph over every assault.

He acts towards us not merely in the security of imperishable power, as pitying our weakness ; but in the fellowship of our struggle, as experiencing in us the weakness of our captive condition (since we are His members, still bound by Satan), He exercises the Divine joy of His Holy Love, by communicating to us the grace necessary for our triumph.

We should always think of the Divine joy which He experiences in giving to us His Body and Blood in Holy Communion, and we ought to realize the power of that gift for our deliverance, by remembering that His reward for having conquered Satan consists in the power which the Father has given Him to make us thus participate in His glory. The elect Servant was to "see of the travail of His Soul and be satisfied, for He shall justify many" (Isa. liii. 11). "The Glory which

Thou gavest Me I have given them" (S. John xvii. 22).

The consciousness that He thus actively dwells in us must stimulate us to meet every temptation—and endure every suffering—with faithful joy worthy of the joy wherewith He comes to us.

Amidst the detailed sufferings and temptations of our outward nature in its weakness, we must welcome the joy of Christ in our inner nature, seeking thereby to develop in us His sanctifying power. So shall we use it as a real, supernatural strength.

The inner nature wherein we are to be sanctified is His. He operates thus within us. If we fail to welcome His indwelling operation, we lose His Presence, and our earthly nature falls back into its emptiness and sin.

Such is the correspondence between us and Him. We dwell in Him by *faithful surrender*, and He dwells in us by *gracious communication*. The Life of Grace is a personal co-operation with Him, both God and Man; and the Holy Spirit of Life, Who is the Bond of the Eternal Trinity, is the living Bond between us and Him, as our Head.

MEDITATION X.

THE VOICE OF THE BELOVED.

He who dwells in us is the Eternal Word.

His Presence, therefore, cannot be a dumb presence.

He is ever speaking by the power of the Holy Ghost.

I. *Our Spiritual Deafness.*

ALAS! our hearts are too often deaf, so that we do not hear Him speak. He speaks by the Holy Ghost: the same Holy Spirit by Whom he sanctified the host of Heaven when He exalted them—the Breath of His Mouth.

We are not left to find out His will, but if we will be attentive He is continually suggesting what will be most helpful to us.

We are apt to think He leaves us. But it is not so. Alas! Too often we leave Him. His Voice requires attentive expectation on our part, if we are to listen to it effectually.

In meditation and in spiritual reading, especially in reading Holy Scripture, we must be very attentive to this Voice.

We are often dry in heavenly exercises, because we do them merely with the natural will and intellect, instead of calling for His co-operation and guidance.

He must inspire, as well as answer, our prayers—speak in us to God, as well as speak from God to us.

He speaks to us collectively, in the formularies of the Church ; and individually, assuring us that we are members incorporate of His mystical Body. So He lets us know His intimate acquaintance with our wants.

So He spoke individually to Mary, calling her by name, when she bewailed His supposed loss.

He makes Divine sweetness to fill the soul with the experience of the Father's Love, when we listen to Him.

The Voice which sanctifies is the same which created. He had a purpose for us in our individual creation, and He lifts us up to the fulfilment of that purpose by our sanctification when He thus speaks within.

He gives us the power to hear whenever He speaks, and we have to yield ourselves up to that power with confidence. There must be attention on our part. His first creative Voice called us out of nothing, but His sanctifying Voice calls us onward. It is the completion of the original creative utterance, and thus we must hear in the

strength of what He has already spoken. "He that hath an ear, let him hear."

II. *The Joy of the Baptist.*

It is the Bridegroom's Voice!

Yet that Voice was not addressing itself to him.
He must die ere that Voice come to him.

Yet could he rejoice in hearing the Voice of the King, while he himself announced the coming of the Kingdom.

Others should hear that Voice calling them into the Kingdom.

He must die in a state of natural expectation purified by the Holy Ghost, and His joy was fulfilled because He could hear that Voice calling others to a supernatural experience of grace, although he must himself remain on earth a stranger to it.

He rejoiced to stand thus on the very threshold of grace, while that Voice was calling others to enter into His rest.

He was not impatient. He sought not the gifts of love, but he rejoiced in the Giver of all gifts. He rejoiced in the love of the Giver. Whatever He might give, His friend and forerunner must rejoice therein.

Though the Heavenly gifts might not be given to Him while He was here, He knew that the

Divine Love which consecrated Him for an earthly mission would perfect natural relationship in the Heavenly unity of Divine glory hereafter.

He desired nothing on earth, for he loved the Lord of Heaven.

We must be careful not to expect, nor to desire, any earthly tokens of Christ's love. If we long for *them*, we lose *Him*. I know Whom I have believed.

He that believeth will not make haste.

Our treasure must be in Heaven, and our hearts and affections must be there also. An earthly heaven does not satisfy even an earthly longing. Man was made for something better than earth, even in its heavenliest appearances. Blessed are they who know the poverty of nature, and wait for their Lord.

So we who have been called by the Bridegroom into His Kingdom must not expect to have our heavenly gifts ministering to our earthly satisfaction. Only in proportion as we are dead to earth can we know the sweetness of the Bridegroom's Voice, calling us out of our state of deadness to the blessedness of the marriage supper, of which we are to be partakers in the end.

It is not sensible emotions, nor visions, nor revelations of mystery, nor gifts of miraculous power, nor the accomplishment of outward things, nor the vocation to special sufferings, which give us the

assurance of the Bridegroom's Voice. The Voice of the Bridegroom calls us simply to Himself, and onward in Himself to various degrees of fellowship on the highway of the Holy Cross. It is not what He says which charms us by awakening expectation. It is the Voice of the Speaker which contains all within itself, for it is the Voice of the Incarnate God. The soul which hears that Voice lives with the love of God.

"Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

That Voice calls us to Baptism, to Priesthood, to Religious dedication, to Profession, to ministerial work—whether at home or abroad.

If we have heard that Voice in each call continuously, then our joy must be fulfilled, however much we may have failed.

If we have taken one step after another without hearing that Voice, then we can have no true joy, however much we may have succeeded.

The joy cannot be written on this side of the grave which is to be revealed in the eternal glory of the heavenly marriage. "All things are ready, come unto the marriage."

Are our hearts ready?

"Even so. Come, Lord Jesus." Call me away from earth that I may come to Thee.

III. *Wherein shall we hear that Voice?*

Greatly must we rejoice to hear the Beloved speaking!

And *how* does He speak?

The music of that Voice is all formed upon the Octave of the Beatitudes.

Are we poor? We rejoice in the Bridegroom's Voice fixing our external condition, and separating us from earth.

Do we mourn? We rejoice in that Voice calling us to see earthly things pass away.

Meekness? We rejoice in that Voice abasing earthly pride.

Hunger for righteousness? We rejoice in that Voice giving us heavenly Food.

Mercy? We rejoice in that Voice which has shown to us such mercy.

Purity of heart? We rejoice in that Voice which alone can cleanse our heart from the fascination of earthly passion to see God and delight in Him.

Peace? We rejoice in that Voice which calls away from earthly strife, for it calls us to be dead to all those things for which men strive, that we may know the blessedness of God's children.

Martyrdom? We rejoice in that Voice which calls us to suffer here, that our whole nature may be attuned so as to hear the Voice of Him that was dead and is alive again.

Blessed Voice of the Beloved ! It calls us from the poverty of Bethlehem to the triumphant consummation of Divine witness unto the Truth in the death of Calvary.

That Voice calls us step by step to follow Him.

"My sheep hear My Voice." So He speaks.

He leads us in and out that we may find pasture.

That Voice is itself the food of the soul which lives in its power. It reveals the fulness of joy, the all-sufficing delight of unchanging Love.

MEDITATION XI.

HEARING AND DOING.

The Voice of the Creator calls us to obedience.

"I come to do Thy will, O my God."

I. *The Sweet Voice.*

As the love of God is ever active, so must all love to God partake of the activity of God's love. This is a supernatural response.

Hence we see why it is that the Voice of the Beloved is not sweet to the *natural* ear, like a song that is heard and only lives in memory. It is sweet to the *heavenly* ear, for it communicates the power of heavenly Life, and lives on within the Soul as a law of heavenly action. Why so?

The natural ear is deaf to the meaning of the Voice because the heart is not kindled with the life of love. The Voice of the Heavenly Speaker is, to the natural mind, only like the notes upon a printed stave. The intellect may accept them as true to the laws of harmony, but there is no vibration, no

responsive sympathy, no unity of love. The loving heart, quickened by the Holy Ghost to the Divine Word, is responsive to that which it hears. The outward acts of life are set in motion by the Voice of the Speaker. The heavenly fellowship causes the spiritual ear to vibrate in obedience to each note. Each note has a creative power, perfecting the original creation with fresh strains of consciousness. The soul thus filled with the heavenly sympathy is not only a hearer of the Word, but also a doer; and it must be blessed in its deed, for it acts true to Him Who is the Fount of all blessing.

The more the Beloved speaks, the greater is the joy of him that hears. That Voice calls to increasing activity and gives increasing strength.

Satan often calls to that which is good in itself, but not to that which is good for him that is addressed.

He sets before us aims which are beyond our power, and leaves us in our weakness, content to acknowledge that they are beyond our power.

Then the call onward leaves the soul to relapse into its incapacity; and the sluggishness which follows upon pride hardens the heart, and makes it incapable of rising up to fresh energy.

II. *The Soul's Obedience to the Voice.*

Jesus calls us to that which is beyond our powers, but as He gives strength to the obedient

soul which hears His voice, the heart becomes humbled in the sense of its own weakness, and yet shrinks from nothing, for it is confident of Divine co-operative grace. Thus the soul becomes ready to receive fresh calls from God, and rises from strength to strength until the goal of the heavenly Zion shall be fully attained.

How dangerous are the calls of God if the soul shrinks from obeying them! How wonderful are the transformations of grace if the soul advances in obedience with humility and faith!

As the operations of nature are gradual—“*continuo, non vero per saltum*”—so the operations of grace are always infinitesimal in the continuity of increase, but infinite in the finality of attainment.

How often would we *jump* to meet God, but then we are sure to fall. The effort often pleases us, just because it is our own.

On the contrary, when God draws us to Himself we are very apt to feel the long-continuing strain whereby God would draw us out of ourselves. The progress may often be wearisome. We seem to get no nearer; but what we feel is the gradual loss of self. We die daily and hourly, not yet attaining, but we press onward by Divine grace, without flinching until the prize be won. It is God Who is working in us. The progress is not only *onward*. That gives pleasure. But *upward*. That makes us feel the burden of our nature. We are drawn

above the level of our own natural plane of action. The power which lifts us up above earth and self makes us hate what is of earth, and die to what is of self.

III. *The Fruit of Obedience.*

Doing what we hear opens the understanding to perceive the truth of what we hear. Divine mysteries can only be learned by this holy illumination.

We are not to be surprised that the world mocks at Divine Truth as we perceive it.

All heresies consist in reducing Divine mysteries to such expressions as the carnal understanding can appreciate. What is not above the natural apprehension cannot be Divine. The world hates what it cannot grasp.

Revealed Truth has no more effect upon the soul when apprehended merely according to the laws of the carnal intellect, than the pattern of a carpet has upon those who walk over it.

The Soul which hears the Divine Word in the power of the Triune Life as revealed by the Spirit of Christ in the heart of His people, recognizes the practical importance of what it hears, and finds therein a delight of holy activity, the anticipation of the glorious energies to be hereafter experienced in their fulness in Heaven above.

The Church of God, the Kingdom of Heaven

upon earth, is the beginning of that glorious Kingdom wherein all energies shall abide, perfected by earthly discipline, and operating eternally without weariness. The Kingdom of Glory is not a state into which we are translated from earthly obedience, but a development of earthly obedience, capable henceforth of acting more efficiently, because the trammels of earthly discipline hold it down no longer. The life, the love, is the same. The Voice of Him That calls is the same. The heart of him that obeys is the same. The glory of God, which is the end of all—sought out in time, and attained in eternity—is the same.

But there is no longer any earthly self to die to. No longer any distraction to interfere with love. The Voice of the Beloved speaks and rings through the purified frame, and there is nothing to jar upon it. The heart receives the utterance with an ear perfectly trained to the perception of the loving Voice. The eye is opened to the Vision of God, and the mysteries which faith recognized are seen in the fulness of the eternal Truth.

The actions of earth are thus expanded into the energy of Heaven. Here,—doing follows hearing, and very feebly at the best. There,—hearing and doing shall be one, the glorious fruition of Divine Love in the Body of Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost.

MEDITATION XII.

THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE KINGDOM OF LIGHT AND THE KINGDOM OF DARKNESS.

"God divided the light from the darkness."

"The Light shineth in darkness ; and the darkness comprehended it not."

"If any man . . . hate not his own life¹ also, he cannot be My disciple."

I. *Christ suffering by His Hatred of Sin.*

CONSIDER how Christ suffered by the consciousness of the sin of His brethren, with whom He was united in the indissoluble bond and sympathy of a moral nature.

He knew His own Consubstantial union with God, and He felt the misery of their nature in its deadness to God. As He felt this organic union with all the multitude of sinners, He exclaimed, "My bones are vexed, My soul is also sore vexed."

¹ ψυχήν, not ζώήν.

He knew what we cannot know, the misery of sin under Satan's bondage. He had come to conquer Satan so that He might set human nature free from this bondage. He had to feel all the power of Satan in order to conquer Satan; for until Satan was conquered, man could not be set free.

His hatred of sin in man was as great as the hatred of Almighty God to sin, for His Human Will was perfectly conformed to the Divine Will.

Without this Divine hatred of the thing which is evil, He could not have kept His own Manhood free from the tyranny of the oppressor.

This hatred of sin was inherent within Him. It was the ceaseless expression of His Personal relationship to all that was in rebellion against God. None but He could have this hatred of sin, for none but He ever lived in the fulness of the Consubstantial Love of God.

Had this hatred been accidental to Him, so that He could for a moment have failed of feeling it, then His love to God would be accidental also. His strife with Satan was not an unwilling task, imposed upon Him by the Will of the Father. It was the exercise of Divine Justice. In Divine Justice the love of righteousness and the hatred of sin must be equal and identical. No personal quality or relationship mingles with the emotion,

either to mitigate or to intensify. Jesus came into the world to establish a Kingdom of righteousness, which should be the constant manifestation of His hatred towards Satan and the rebel angels, and towards all who should submit to Satan's control.

Evil was not an abstraction which He could deplore. It was a personal organization of rebellion against God, the source of all good. He could not but hate it. So must His Church in like manner exert a personal hatred of evil. The kingdom of truth and the kingdom of falsehood, the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness, are opposed, and must be opposed. Hence the utterance of the Psalmist: "Yea, I hate them right sore: even as though they were mine enemies" (Ps. cxxxvi. 22). The Psalmist's utterances are not the wail of human sorrow because of human misery or human ill-treatment. They are the prophetic utterances of the Son of God against those who repudiated the Divine Ministry entrusted to Him by His Father.

We fail of rising up to the Divine Love of the Heavenly Kingdom unless we rise up to that hatred which separates the Kingdom of the Redeemed from the kingdom of the rebel, the enmity between the Seed of the Woman and the seed of the Serpent.

II. *S. John preached, "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."*

If we would enter into that Kingdom, we must hate sin as Christ hated it. Only by such hatred of sin can we come to repentance.

Alas! how much effort there is for good in the world nowadays! But how little hatred of sin, as sin. How little hatred of Satan's bondage! How ready we are to condone evil! Sensitive enough we are to any wrong done to ourselves; but oh, how wanting in any sensibility towards wrong that is done against God! We are too ready to think that the sin does not matter because He does not feel any injury from it; but we forget that Christ has suffered. He suffered because by sin man injured himself, although man's act could not touch the Being of God. God's work was marred which should have shone with all the righteousness and love of God. Oh, the sorrow of the Incarnation in contemplating the wreck of God's noblest creation! Alas, how little do we feel that sorrow! How thoughtlessly do we aggravate the evil! How little do we attempt to repair it!

How little are we moved by anything, except it be some great crime which shocks our natural sense! How little do we feel the sins of human nature as our own; and yet we are of one substance with all mankind, even as Christ was! We ought

to regard Satan's bondage with the same hatred which moved Him.

But there is something worse! How little do we hate sin in ourselves! We are sorry for some acts of sin: we are sadly dead to any consciousness of sin, as keeping us from that experience of Christ's Heavenly Kingdom which we ought to have. How few tears! How little revenge!

We can only come to know sin as Christ is revealed within us. He gives the knowledge of God by His Holy Spirit, and thus He gives the knowledge of sin.

We must know and hate sin more and more as we come to fuller knowledge of the Divine Life, which is ours in Christ.

We are ready enough to hate our own enemies, those whom we suppose to have done us some injury. If we hated sin, we should love them for the very suffering which they may have occasioned to us. We should hate ourselves, for we are sinners, and we should recognize them as the instruments of God's just punishment. Alas, we hate them because we feel the suffering. We add to our sin by resenting their injury. We do not feel the outrage committed against God, whether by them or by ourselves. We might repair it by self-sacrificing love; we aggravate it by self-seeking and revenge.

Indeed, we must rise out of the finite personal relationships of this sinful world. Then shall we hate evil as God hates it, and love good as God loves it. Good and evil must always be at variance. There is no good save in the fellowship of the life of God. He alone is good. None are good save as living in Him. Whatever is separate from God is evil. Love seeks to redeem and transform, but what is perverse must perish by the very love which it has repudiated. Love looks to God, seeking to repent and to be transformed by Him and in Him, for He only is good, the source, the power, the life of love. Love knows that it can win none to be worthy of love, save by itself abiding true to the Kingdom of Christ, loving all in Him, and none except in Him. None can be worthy of love except in Him Who is the Incarnate Love. None can do the work of love except in proportion as they die to all that is outside of Christ, the Incarnate Redeemer.

O wonderful love whereby the Kingdom of Christ is perfected, and sinners reclaimed to God ! By this love we hate ourselves ; we hate the world ; we hate whatever binds us to the world. By this love we love whatever loosens the world's hold upon us ; we love the suffering which an evil world inflicts ; we love the Cross ; yea ! with a true love, eternal, infinite, triumphant, pure, as the members of Christ our Redeemer, we love the world, and

our own selves, and all that God has created, for He created all in order that all might, by sharing His love, become worthy of His Love.

As we come to the knowledge of sin, we must fly in penitence to Him Who took our sins upon Himself. We fly from sin because God hates sin, and by the law is the knowledge of sin. We abide in Christ by hating sin ourselves, as we are made the righteousness of God in Him. The Holy Ghost in Christ teaches us to love God and to hate sin with a Divine hatred.

The sin which we have to hate is the continuance of Satan's power binding us, blinding us. Until we are freed from sin by death, we have his tyranny continually overwhelming us, as a fog which shuts out the Divine Light.

O Lord, how long?

How intensely must we long to behold the fair beauty of the Lord as befits the innermost sanctuary of the Temple of Christ's Body!

Only as that vision shines upon us more and more, can we come to the penitence of Saints.

So must we welcome Christ's Kingdom.

This must be our object in our cells and in our preaching, to grow in penitence and bring others to penitence, not merely in outward reform, but in spiritual affection and life!

The Lamb of God in His triumph is the Light of the Heavenly Jerusalem, and we must have His

Image stamped within our hearts by the power of the Holy Ghost.

As that Image is perfected within us, we shall feel how He hates sin ; so shall we share that hatred. Yea, we shall feel how He loves God ; so shall we rise up in true penitence to perfect love.

III. *Christ's Kingdom here in spite of the Sin which is around.*

The nearness of the Kingdom of Heaven is not the nearness of days, but the nearness of power.

Christ's Kingdom is already in the midst of us.

We are already made inheritors thereof, partakers of the powers of the world to come.

We cannot plead the wickedness of nature as an excuse for continuance in sin. We are partakers of the Divine nature, and are called to live in the fellowship of the Divine Love by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Not to hate sin is to resist the Holy Ghost, the Personal operation of the Spirit of God acting in ourselves, who are incorporated into the Lamb of God.

He was the Son of God, the King of Israel. He was born a King. His Kingdom was not to be won by outward victory. He brought His kingdom in Himself. He was Himself the nucleus of its life. Other monarchs win their kingdoms : weak in

themselves, they gather strength by that which they win. Christ had the strength within Himself. He did not become strong by the victories which He won, but He gave strength from Himself to those whom He conquered. By His victory He subdued them to Himself, and made them conquerors, and they again spread forth His victorious power by exercising the life which He gave them. They did not become strong by that which they subdued, but by living in the strength received from Him. In this strength they conquered, and it was exhaustless. Those whom they conquered became strong by being conquered. No strength accrued to the expanding Kingdom by absorption from without. Its strength was always the strength of a vital force inherent in the Personality of the original Conqueror, and transmitted from Him in exhaustless freshness to each generation as it was subdued to Him.

So the Kingdom of Light spread through the darkness. The Light was infinite. It was Divine. It did not therefore lose brightness or power by expansion. Its triumphant power remained the same, without suffering diminution by extension. It dispelled the darkness; and the Word of God, with His armies united in Heavenly Life with Himself, went forth conquering and to conquer.

Nevertheless, the struggle against the darkness was a real struggle, both at the outset and from

age to age, as time went on. The Divine Omnipotence did not supersede the pressure of the conflict which those had to bear in whom the triumphant power of the Heavenly Life went forth to victory. The Divine Omnipotence did not crush out before them the antagonism of the darkness which they had to subdue, but it strengthened them with an inherent power of victory, such that no pressure of external antagonism could mar their final victory, if only they were faithful to bear all that the enemy could do in resisting them. They triumphed by suffering.

This triumph by suffering shows that the extension of the Kingdom of Light was not to be a mere diffusion of light in a region that was waiting for it. It was to be a victory over darkness in a region occupied by a hostile power. If the power of darkness is hostile, there must be a hatred of the darkness equal to the victorious power of the light.

Alas! how apt we are to think of beneficence as if that were the only thing needed, and to regard the extension of good as if that were possible without a proportionate destruction of evil. There must always be a struggle proportionate to the victory. If we are faithful to God's love, He will always give us a victory proportionate to the struggle. The struggle is the measure of the power of the enemy. The power of the Divine Conqueror Who acts in us, is infinite.

It is not enough to deal with the consequences of evil, which may be alleviated by beneficence, unless we realize the radical personal activity of evil which must be met by Divine judgment. The present day ignores evil in itself, and merely thinks of evil in so far as we can see its effect upon mankind in this outer world.

Satan likes to lie hidden, but there can be no triumph of the Church by superficial extension of Christian ideas. There must be a struggle against the Evil One. There must be a real hatred of sin as a personal domination by which men are held in darkness and misery. Without this there can be no victory of the Kingdom of Light.

“O ye that love the Lord, see that ye hate the thing which is evil.”

In all suffering we must bear the pain with cheerfulness, because we hate the tyranny of Satan, and we recognize even our small sufferings as capable of being accepted by Almighty God for the furtherance of His Kingdom, if we therein triumph over Satan by the power of the Holy Ghost, as Christ by that power triumphed on Calvary.

Without suffering we cannot extend Christ's Kingdom of Light. Wonderful is the Love of God which permits us, as the children of light, to develop from age to age in our unworthy efforts the virtues of Christ's redeeming struggle. We cannot add to those virtues, but we are called to

live by them, and that can only be in proportion as we suffer. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him" (2 Tim. ii. 12).

So, then, if we are to take our part with God, we must hate evil as God hates evil. We must hate evil, not upon principles of human philanthropy, because of superficial misery which evil occasions in this world to man—but we must hate evil as a kingdom of rebel power, antagonistic to God and to the Kingdom of Light, an evil power which is seeking to swallow up mankind because created in the Image of God. Man must be rescued from the power of evil by the suffering which grace quickens with Divine power in the Kingdom of Light. Otherwise man must perish eternally under this power of evil as the slave of Satan in the kingdom of darkness.

MEDITATION XIII.

THE PERSONALITY OF SATAN.

"He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His Heel."

"The whole world lieth in the Wicked One."

"Deliver us from the Wicked One."

WE must be careful not to think of wickedness as an abstraction. The Wicked One is a personal power, swallowing up that which God has created, as far as he can. His personality must be recognized as the source of evil. Otherwise we shall not recognize the Person of Christ as the source of good.

We are not to conceive of any creature as being neutral in its character, neither good nor evil. All things which God created are created by the Word in the power of the Holy Ghost, and therefore all creation partakes of the holiness of the Creator. Evil is that condition into which the creature falls when it loses the sanctifying Presence of God. Satan, the enemy, was created as the Morning Star of Divine brightness. Probably he belonged to the order of the Cherubim. This earth of ours was

given to him as his special domain. When he fell he involved the earth in his fall, and the taint of his widespread wickedness rests upon everything in the world, until it is sanctified by the renewal of the Holy Ghost, having been taken out of Satan's dominion through the redeeming power of the Word of God and the ministry of prayer.

I. Satan the Prince of this World.

The world which had been created by God full of light and order, became without form and void when the presiding power lost the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Then the darkness came upon the face of the deep, for Satan had no light in himself when he lost the Divine brightness.

Probably his rebellion against God was occasioned by the proud contemplation of his own dignity, the dignity which God had given him. He looked upon it as if it were his own.

It has been supposed by many, and there is good reason for the supposition, that God revealed to the Angel hosts the future Incarnation of His Son, and that Lucifer refused to worship a Being Who should be clothed in a nature of earth inferior to that in which he himself existed.

He deceived the woman, and through her destroyed the human race. He was a liar and a murderer from the beginning.

As the spirit of darkness, he was the spirit of

death ; for darkness is the absence of the presence of light whereby God sustains creation in life. When God created the light in the midst of the darkness, He separated the one from the other. The light was good ; the darkness evil. Satan was himself dark and dead, and he involved our first parents in the same. The sheen which glorified their bodies passed away from their bodies, and the light of truth from their souls.

Henceforth life was to them a delusion. Their bodies lived, but their souls had no longer the light of Divine truth quickening them. The adder's poison was upon the lips of the nature enslaved to Satan's impulses. The outward life was to be sustained with toil. The offspring of the woman was to be born in anguish. Instead of the Word of God becoming Incarnate as the Seed of the Woman, a numerous race was to be born for many generations as the perverted seed of the Serpent, ever speaking lies, deceiving and being deceived.

Those who were called out from among their brethren by the hope of a Redeemer, would be the special objects of Satan's rage. When the Redeemer came, the Incarnate Son of God would be bruised by him in fierce conflict, while he would strive to tear Him away from the allegiance to His Heavenly Father ; but the conflict would issue in the predestined victory of the Eternal, and He would establish

the Kingdom of Light and Truth, crushing the Serpent's head.

The victory over the Serpent was not, however, to be immediately complete. When the Redeemer was caught up to the Heavenly Throne, the Serpent, being cast down to earth, would carry on a ceaseless war against the remainder of the seed of the woman, the mystical Body of Christ, the Church militant.

How little do we realize this strife as a continuous struggle of the children against the powers of darkness! Terrible strife, in which Satan would often seem to have the supernatural, the predestined offspring, entirely in his power!

The promise remains sure in spite of all. The gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church. Satan, though he be loosed and go forth to deceive the four quarters of the world, gathering them to battle, will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone; and all whom he has deceived shall be slain by the fire which shall come down from the Throne of Jesus.

Then shall the end be. Then shall the Son deliver up the Kingdom to the Eternal Father. Then shall the Kingdom of God come with power. It is the final glorification of God's people with Himself. But none can have their share in it who have not fought against the devil and his angels and the multitude of the sinful world during the time of strife.

II. Our Personal Struggle.

The personal strife between Satan and the individual members of the Body of Christ must never be forgotten: nor the character of the warfare. Satan is going about "seeking whom he may devour." He is not ubiquitous, but his movements are those of a spiritual power, spreading his treacherous influence in ways which surpass our imagination. He assailed the woman in Paradise, and Jesus both in the wilderness and in Gethsemane. So he assails each one by himself. Neither multitude nor isolation evades his power. As the lion and as the adder, he will assail, both by violence and by fraud. He has the power of death, and by his threats he can hold all the ends of the earth in terror, and by the speciousness of his promises he can draw the minds of men into subjection. Although he is the Prince of Darkness he can assume such outward glitter as will make him seem to be an Angel of Light. He blasphemes God by pretending to offer better gifts to man than those which are consistent with the obedience of faith. As he accused God when he spoke to Eve, pretending that God grudged her that gift of knowledge which was within her reach, so he is ever awakening hopes in the hearts of men that they may attain, by earthly and simple agencies, what God seems to withhold; and yet that which he promises to them as a fruit of their

rebellion is only what God sets forth as the eventual glory of faithful life, to be given to such as will withstand the diabolical deception. He has no good to offer but that which God Himself has created. The good which he offers will be the blessing of those who are true to God, while yet it is fraught with evil consequences which we cannot foresee, if we choose it hastily for ourselves in violation of the Will of God.

As he is the Prince of this World, he is able to offer all the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them to those who will give ear to his suggestions ; but as they are given to him only upon conditions and for a time, he cannot bestow them as a lasting possession. The gifts of this world will soon be taken away from those who have them. What Satan gives is lifeless at the very first, so that it brings no satisfaction to the soul, but soon passes away into manifest corruption, so that it turns to the destruction of the possessor.

Thus does Satan, as the father of lies, lead us into rebellion against God, and make us forfeit that fellowship of Divine Life, whereby we ought to claim God's promises, and triumph over Satan's enmity.

We are placed in this world to conquer Satan by allegiance to the Divine Word. If we remain true to that Word, Satan's assaults will only serve to develop in us the glory which God gives. If we

set that Word aside, we fall under the darkness and power of death.

Satan may assail us individually or collectively. The fashions of thought by which society is carried away at various times are really his inspiration. Whatever makes us set up a human standard, or an earthly instrumentality, in place of reliance upon the Word of God, is an artifice of his fraud.

The true resistance to Satan can only be by the life of faith, recognizing the Divine Sovereignty as the sole power, and the Divine law as the sole guide of life. All the faculties of sense belonging to our outward nature are so entirely at his command, by reason of the fall, that they need to be continually withdrawn from the plausibilities of outward appearance, that they may act conformably to the Divine revelation. What God says to us is not what our own nature would seek after. Mortification of self is necessary in every detail of our approach to God. We have thus to break the Satanic yoke which holds us down. We are so liable to be deceived that we cannot trust our own judgment. If we would resist Satan, we must act with the docility of little children in the Love of God. We may be quite sure that God will keep us safe from Satan if we look to Him. He has created us to conquer Satan by the obedience of faith and the endurance of hope, and so we must abide and attain to perfection in His Love.

“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

“Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you.”

III. *Human Nature enslaved to Satan.*

By enticing man to yield to his promises and disobey God, Satan made man his slave. Man had been free before. He had the Holy Ghost dwelling within him, and glorifying him as the son of God. When he sinned he lost the Divine sonship, with all its glory and its life. His nature, blinded and corrupt, was a prey to the evil passions and false imaginations which Satan excited within him. He was exposed to all the sufferings which Satan could bring upon him. Truly, God in His mercy sheltered him from many evils; but man having a dead soul, although his body was alive, was liable to manifold sufferings of disease and death.

After death there was no hope for him. His soul was dead to God even before his body died through disease. The grave yawned for him as a place of silence, darkness, hopelessness, where the word, the light, the life of God could never come.

God interposed with the glorious promise of a Redeemer. Man's sufferings did not happen by the arbitrary Will of God, but they resulted from

Satan's tyranny when man had forfeited the Divine Life which kept him safe from Satan's power. All suffering comes from Satan. So we read in the Book of Job. So our Lord speaks of the woman whom Satan had bound so many years. Sickness is not necessarily a sign of special sin on the part of the sufferer. It may be God's special opportunity for giving us a victory over Satan. But all sickness is the result of man's having once for all lost the Divine Life. If we do not perish in sickness by want of faith, we shall be sanctified thereby in the faithfulness of love. It was a token of Christ's redemptive power, that He should bear away our sicknesses, claiming us thereby from Satan's malice to experience God's loving-kindness. He can raise us out of Satan's violence, healing us. He can rouse us out of sin by chastisement; as when St. Paul delivered some over to Satan that they might learn not to blaspheme. He can sanctify us for special ministries of grace by the agony whether of body or soul: even as Christ Himself perfected His own Humanity by submitting to His redeeming struggle, and sanctifies His members continually by causing them to be united with Him in bearing the Cross.

Without suffering we cannot escape from the tyranny of Satan; but suffering will avail us nothing unless we accept it in loving self-sacrifice

in union with our crucified and triumphant Redeemer. Our sufferings are only the debt of nature, which our tyrant is able to demand irrespectively of individual desert. Union with Christ by grace is the only power which can raise us out of Satan's claim, whereby he would wreak upon us his vengeance, having got us under his power by Adam's sin. However happy the exterior life may be, he will canker it with manifold disappointments and endless sorrow, if we do not accept the Cross of Christ as our only stay, for Christ has conquered him thereon. That victory is able to transform all transitory sorrows into eternal joys, if we live in union with our crucified and risen Saviour. The sufferings which unite us with the Cross recoil upon his own head, so that the sufferer goes forth as more than conqueror over him, marching with holy joy through the valley of the shadow of death. The rod and staff of the Redeemer stir up within him all the comfort and joy of the Holy Ghost.

MEDITATION XIV.

THE LAMB OF GOD.

"My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt-offering."

"Your lamb shall be without blemish."

"In the midst of the Throne and of the four Beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth."

MANY a lamb had died in sacrificial hope, but the institution of the Passover was the gathering up of the general idea of sacrifice into fellowship with the sacrifice of Isaac, and the inheritance of Abraham's blessing.

As Eve over-hastily supposed that Cain, her firstborn son, was to be the promised Redeemer, so not impossibly Abraham may have supposed that his son Isaac, being miraculously born, would obtain the redemptive triumph when he gave himself to die. That was not to be. Nevertheless, the whole future race was offered up to death in the person of Isaac; and the whole nation, as having died to the world, was raised up to a

supernatural relationship to God by the inheritance of their progenitor's self-sacrifice. Four hundred years, four generations, were to pass away, and then at last the nation would be delivered from the bondage fore-announced to Abraham. Then the whole nation would go forth as a unit. The migration was not to be the mere escape of an earthly race from bondage. That race was to have a Sacramental unity by the institution of the Paschal lamb. The blessing inherent in Isaac would be gathered up by the unity of that national oblation. The restoration of Isaac to life would be a principle of collective power, springing up into manifestation as the redemptive pledge to all his posterity. In the unity of this representative sacrifice the whole nation were as one Person, the Son of God.

I. The Paschal Lamb as sheltering from Death.

The Paschal lamb was the embodiment of the ideal unity of Israel. The blessing which was to spread to all nations from Isaac, who had been surrendered by his father as a sacrifice to God with the confidence of a Divine benediction triumphing through death, was to be developed in the nation at large, now that the time was come for the prediction of their deliverance to be accomplished, when God would judge the nation which had held

them in thrall. The time is come for God to bring His Son out of Egypt. That Son, Whose Humanity was exhibited collectively in the people of Israel, was the Heir of the promises enshrined in the personal individuality of Isaac.

Isaac had been supernaturally born. Israel's deliverance from foreign bondage was not to be an earthly revolution effected by human power. It must be an anticipation of the deliverance which should be finally accomplished when the true Isaac should appear in Israel. He would accomplish the great deliverance by "going to the Father," Who called Him to the promised inheritance. Upon the Cross He would leave the world of Satan's tyranny which Egypt symbolized. Then, also, "the Prince of this world" should be "judged" (St. John xvi. 11).

The deliverance would be accomplished not by escaping death, but by dying. The Sacramental death of the whole nation, by participating in the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb, was a typical enactment foreshadowing that final issue. It was also an evolutionary phase of national existence, evoking this prophetic destiny, so as to send the whole nation forward that it might enter upon a new career of closer supernatural fellowship with God.

Egypt was doomed—Egypt, a type of the whole world under the dominion of Satan. The seed of Abraham, which had been the object of their

tyrannical hatred, was to be delivered. As the seed of Abraham, they were the chosen people of God ; yet not merely as Abraham's natural offspring. The people of God are not those who are born of blood alone. They must be partakers of Abraham's covenant. As men, they were under the curse along with Egypt. Egyptian and Israelite, the persecutor and the persecuted, were both alike under sin. The doom of death rested upon all. Egypt had brought down the curse upon itself, but the Israelite could put forward no claim for exemption from the penalty. "It is appointed unto all men once to die." Israel could not put forward the promises made to Abraham as any guarantee against the universal decree, so sure in its operation, although so uncertain in its time of accomplishment. The angel was to smite all the firstborn throughout the land of Egypt. Those only could be excepted who sought the protection of a Sacramental covenant ; born of Abraham after the flesh, but claiming the promised protection of the God of Abraham by the obedience of faith. The Paschal lamb was the appointed representative of Isaac's blessing, and those who fed thereon would be counted as being dead along with him, so that they should no longer be liable to the natural penalty of death which would smite every other family throughout the land of Egypt. Feeding upon the lamb that was slain,

they would be accounted as having died to the world, so that their fellowship with the God of their fathers would exalt them to a Sacramental life, where the destroying angel could not touch them.

The Paschal lamb was more than a substituted offering. He was the representative of the nation of Israel in their collective capacity as heirs of Isaac's promise. No one could put this sacrifice forward unless he were himself an heir of Isaac, so as to claim, through the mediation of this sacrifice, the promise given of God in former time to his progenitor. We are not to think of the Paschal lamb as if God required the death of an animal to be a substitute for the death of a human being. God ordained this service intending that the virtue of the Abrahamic covenant should spring into power thereby. The whole idea of sacrifice gained a fresh meaning from this time forward. Victims of olden time pointed to a Redeemer. From henceforth the Paschal sacrifice points to the Second Isaac, Who by death shall destroy him that tyrannized over a dead world, and raise the people of God to receive the promise of Eternal Life.

The Paschal lamb was taken up on the tenth day, to be sacrificed on the fourteenth. These four days are supposed to represent the four centuries from the birth of Isaac to the Exodus. We may also regard them as indicating the four millennia of

Biblical chronology from Adam to Christ. The creation of Adam was like the setting apart of the lamb. The first Adam bore in himself the predestination which was to be accomplished four thousand years after by the Second Adam. We must consider how God predestinates, prepares, and preserves His creatures. That which seems to involve His purpose in overthrow is overruled by Him for the advancement of His glory. The Satanic tyranny exercised against the chosen people leads to the manifestation of an occult Divine life. Their outward helplessness manifests the interior glory of their predestination.

How needful it is for us to recognize in every time of special trouble that God has ordained it for a special manifestation of His glory in our deliverance, and that we must associate ourselves with the true Paschal Lamb by accepting the difficulty as a portion of the Cross. God is taking us up, as it were, to prove whether we be fit to be associated with our Lord's Passion. He prepares us in various ways against Satan's assaults, and we are not to look forward with apprehension to the coming difficulty. It is for us to yield ourselves up cheerfully by preparatory devotion, so that we may not perish under Satan's power, but may be accepted of God when the trial comes.

The blood of the lamb was to be sprinkled on the lintel and side-posts of the door. Christ is the

Door, and this sprinkling of the blood was the type of His Crucifixion. This sprinkling must not be confounded with the sprinkling of blood upon the veil of the Temple. That sprinkling symbolized the entrance into life which the Blood of Resurrection should effect hereafter. We must abide in Christ's sheltering death if we are then to share His glorious life. Christ, into Whose death we are baptized, is the Door of a hallowed grave wherein we have to wait with Him in patient hope. We are baptized into His Death. None must go out of the house until the morning. We must take care to be buried with our Paschal Lamb, not going forth in negligence of His covenant, but dead to the world in union with Him until the morning of the Resurrection. All the houses of Israel constituted one great Sacramental sepulchre on this Paschal night.

The lamb was to be roasted whole. Our sacrifice to God must be a perfect sacrifice. Our oblation of ourselves to God must be complete, and God's care of us will be complete. "A bone of Him shall not be broken." The expression is intended to teach us both the perfection of the oblation which God requires on our part, and the limitation of the power of the Evil One. Our fallen nature, broken as it is, could never be accepted of God. The sacrifice of Christ, in its unbroken perfection, is the door of acceptance. The Paschal

lamb is the parent of all the subsequent sacrifices of the Mosaic dispensation. The Sacrifice of Christ, in His unmarred Humanity, is the germ of all sacrifices that we can offer.

The people were to eat of it in haste, and none was to be left until the morning. Death is the beginning of a journey. Those who kept the Pass-over were not only escaping from Egypt. As the children of the Paschal lamb they were escaping from the life of the world. Such must be our consecration of ourselves to God : a consecration complete, instantaneous, separating us from the world as death separates us. We are baptized into the death of Christ. We must be dead to sin. This is the grace of our Baptism, a death unto sin. Dying to Egypt and to sin, we seek a better country, even a heavenly. We go to God.

None must be left until the morning. Our death in Christ must be complete. We can look forward to no morning short of the Resurrection. There must be no earthly morning, no coming back to earthly life and its enjoyments.

No one, therefore, must go out of the house until the morning. The food is the Food of Heaven, preparing for the heavenly journey. Those who feed thereon must be intent upon the Heavenly journey. The Food of the Resurrection, and of the children who are to share in the Resurrection, must know no morrow of earth. On that night

God would execute judgment upon all the gods of Egypt (Ex. xii. 12).

It was the night on which the Soul of the true Paschal Lamb would descend into Hell, and bruise the Serpent's head. The people of the covenant were to be associated with Him, for in that He descended into Hell, He would set free the souls that were expecting Him there. If they were to be partakers of Christ's Resurrection, they must be partakers of His Death and His Descent.

Surely now in the Christian dispensation, our Sacramental identification with the death of Christ must be no less complete than the typical identification of the generation which escaped from Egypt. We must not be content to be partially buried with Him, and to come forth from the grave of Christ to share in the night season of earthly pleasure. Alas, how little do we think of being buried with Christ, and remaining in the grave of Christ until the Morning of the Resurrection!

II. Burial with the Lamb of God.

So then, the blood of the Paschal Lamb marks a tomb. We are buried with Christ. Christ was not buried that we might live to the world. Our burial with Him lasts until the great Easter of the final Resurrection. This burial is no condition of sadness. It is a life hid with Christ in God. No

wonder that the Church is so feeble in the world, when Christian people have so little thought of being buried to the world, dead with Christ, rejoicing only in God. The marvel is that God tolerates His Church at all. We have no right to look for joy in that to which we have died.

How Satan deceives the Christian Church and gets Christian people under his power, by making them leave the home of burial with the Paschal Lamb, as if they might live to an earthly morrow without danger, and find earthly things in some sort sanctified by heavenly memories ; as if the earthly honouring of Christ's Passion by holy symbols and conventional display would be an abiding participation in the Passion, whereas Christ calls us to be buried with Him in His death. We think we may live in the world and yet be dead to the world along with Him, if only we have certain memorials of art, giving a Christian tone to the world's demands.

But no ! Burial with Christ is of no avail without perseverance !

Who, then, shall be saved ?

Alas ! Who ?

We must strive to enter in at the strait gate, the gate of death. The life into which we would enter is not the life to which we have died. There is but one Life for us, the Life of the third morning. To leave the grave of Christ until that morning comes, is to draw back unto perdition.

If the world at large repudiates the Death of Christ, how specially needful is it for Religious to abide in this Burial. Christ calls the Religious to recognize by the vows of Profession the deadness to the world to which he was pledged at his Baptism. According to the clearness of the avowal will be the strictness of the judgment. We must not think that our vows as Religious will make up for any secularity of thought and life in our daily conduct. Whatever we would do, our first thought must be to cherish a true life of deadness to the world. We cannot lead others out of Egypt unless we know our life to be in the tomb of Christ. The door marked with His Blood must separate us from the world. Our morrow must be a morrow of march when the night-time of earthly life shall have passed away. There must be no morrow of earthly delight—no endeavour to seek a few hours of rest in Egypt when we have said good-bye to it for ever! Those who are buried with Christ shall share His glorious Easter. We must not be of those who draw back unto perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

III. *The Lamb the Mystical Father of the Nation.*

The blessing of the sacrifice of Isaac germinates in the ransomed people through the unifying consecration of the Paschal sacrifice. All are dead and

buried in that Paschal night. The many homes of Israel are all as one by reason of the blood that marks the door. All who dwell therein are as one, for they are all partakers of that one meal. All are given to God as one, for that meal is a sacrifice. It is the Lord's Passover. All are recognized by God as one. "Israel is My son, even My firstborn : let My son go, that he may serve Me" (Exod. iv. 22, 23). This is the victory of the promised Redeemer, the Seed of the Woman bruising the Serpent's head. God is with the avenging Angel who smites the Egyptians and the gods of Egypt. He is the Conqueror. The covenant is His. "The Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come into your houses to smite you" (Exod. xiii. 23). The Son of God is the Victim, the Redeemer Whose Heel is bruised. The Son of God is the Representative of the Father, the Redeemer Who this night bruises the Serpent's head. The Divine Presence is made manifest in Israel. It is the anticipation of the Sacrifice of Calvary. They who are the seed of Abraham, not after the flesh but after the spirit, should be bruised with Christ, and should all be One Body, because they feed on the One Bread. Then the Son of God went forth to smite the powers which held man captive. He went forth in the fulness of Divine vengeance. This struggle is not for the deliverance of a chosen people from an evil world, but for the

deliverance of the Humanity of the Son of God Himself, represented by that chosen people who inherited the blessing of Isaac, and were predestined to be the collective representative of the Redeemer Who should be born in a future age. The fight of God against the gods of Egypt is not for Israel as a multitude, or as a human nationality, but for His own Son. God sees His own Son in that covenanted people who were designated to be His ancestry.

This leads us to recognize the great truth of Universal Redemption. It is human nature which is redeemed as a complete whole, the human nature which Christ would assume. The Son of God would become Man. He would not be a man separate from other individuals; He would be of one substance with all mankind. He would not take a Personal origin from the Blessed Virgin; He would assume that substance which she had inherited from Adam. This human nature was enslaved in Adam and was redeemed in Christ. But, before Christ could redeem it, it was necessary that He should experience the bondage, becoming subject to death according to the conditions of this fallen world. Hence the Serpent was to bruise His Heel. He could not claim the exemption from suffering, proper to Him as the Son of God, until He left this world by dying. No one could take His Human Life away from Him, but He

could not leave the world which was under the dominion of death by any other road than that of death. If He could have done so, He would not have been the Redeemer of mankind, for His own Humanity would have had no fellowship with the enslaved humanity of other men.

Christ did not redeem all mankind numerically as individuals, but potentially, inasmuch as the redemption of His own Humanity was offered to all by Sacramental communication, so that all who would might participate therein.

The Israelites do not represent a chosen few whom God was pleased to redeem. They represent the Humanity of Christ, which was the sphere of redeemed life. Humanity outside of Christ, was dead. The Humanity of Christ could be the instrument of redemption, because although outwardly enslaved it had within it the life of the Divine Sonship. Thus is redemption vouchsafed to all. Christ is the High Priest Who is the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him.

Unbelievers treat the Christian idea of redemption with scorn, as if it were unjust that a guiltless person should be made the victim, and substituted for the guilty. But Holy Scripture represents the Redeemer, not as a suffering Victim, but as a suffering Champion. He suffers at the hands of Satan, under whose tyranny He was content to

come in order that He might set man free. The suffering was the suffering of a voluntary conflict.

Unbelievers also scoff at the idea of God exacting the penalty of death from those for whom the penalty was paid by the Redeemer. The teaching of Holy Scripture is not open to this charge. Christ did not redeem the persons of all mankind. He redeemed human nature which He bore upon Himself, and He invites all persons to be incorporated with this redeemed Humanity that they may live with His Life. None are excluded from this redemption. The scheme of particular redemption has no Scriptural warrant. Christ died for us in our humanity that He might redeem it. We have still to die; but, if we die in union with Him, we are partakers of the Divine Life by Whose power He effected the redemption. He did not die for mankind as external to Himself; He was Himself its complete Representative. He is the Seed of the Woman into which we must be incorporated if we would be partakers of that new life which the name of Eve foresignified. The children of Adam had not that life. Eve was the mother of all living, because there was thenceforward no life to be had save in her supernatural offspring. All her sons were dead. As the children of Adam we have to die, but as incorporated in the Seed of the Woman, we are partakers of that new life which the Redeemer has claimed on our behalf,

by passing through death and conquering the powers of Hell.

The Paschal triumph over the gods of Egypt sets before us the great mystery of Redemption. The Son of God was content to come into this world of Satan's power and to share our slavery, suffering all that the tyrant and the evil world of nature—"the serpent and his seed"—could do against Him. By the Eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God when all the powers of Hell were exhausted. Then He could say, "It is finished." He calls us to be buried with Himself, and to die with Him to the outer world, feeding upon His Body which has passed through death; and thus He lifts up Humanity into the glorious liberty of the Resurrection Life. We are not required to die over again, as if the death of Christ were an inadequate redemption; we have to die along with Christ according to the terms of man's original enslavement, so that, being partakers of His Eternal Life, we may enter into the blessedness of His Redemption.

So must we be dead to the world by the power of grace in Christ. He is to us, His members, the Father of Everlasting Life (Isa. vii. 6). If we do not live in His death, as dead to the world, we must die with the world and be cast into the abyss of fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

If we could but realize the solemnity of that

Paschal night, surely we should be more careful to live in the truth of God's covenant, and claim our portion in the greater Passover which it prefigured!

"Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin."

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (S. John viii. 34, 36).

MEDITATION XV.

BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD!

The object of our ministry is to lead men to Christ.

S. John Baptist prepared men to come to Him on earth.

We must prepare men to go to Him in Heaven.

S. JOHN the Baptist came, in fulfilment of prophecy, to make Christ known. In Christ, the Redeemer, the Paschal lamb was to find its completeness. By this Paschal Lamb, the true Lamb of God, the powers of darkness were to be judged, and man was to be raised through death to Life Eternal.

The bondage of Egypt must be felt ere the redemption could be accepted. Sin must be hated ere the Saviour could be loved. John came preaching repentance because the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. Every mountain of pride must be laid low. All crooked places must be made straight. The coming Kingdom of Christ was a judgment. Men must flee from the wrath to come.

The message of comfort was for those who

would accept the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness. It was the call to a triumphant Exodus, a new Covenant. They who had acknowledged their fault, had received of the Lord's Hand double for all their sins, and now they should receive the full outpouring of Divine love. The appointed time of their affliction was over, as when Moses brought the people out of Egypt. But now it is One greater than Moses Who brings the great salvation.

As the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt with a strong Hand (Ex. xiv. 10), so now He will come with a strong Hand, or as a Strong One (Isa. xi. 10). The same strength which was visibly manifested against the visible powers of the Egyptian tyrant shall again be called into action. Now it is an invisible foe that is to be bruised. But it is the Arm of the Lord Who comes to bruise his head.

The bondage of Egypt is thus seen by the prophetic vision as reproduced in the long years of Babylonian trouble, with the calamities following it, and the deliverance by the Paschal Lamb springs up in fresh power by the new revelation of the arm of the Lord (Ps. vi. 6; Isa. xi. 10). Jesus is the Arm of the Lord. Jesus is the Paschal Lamb. The prophet identifies the one with the other when he tells how "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter" (Isa. liii. 7).

To Him the Baptist points, for "He bears the sin of the world."

He bears the sin by coming into the world. He is identified with that world into which He comes. He is "made" sin for us, although He knew no sin. By the absence of human personality He does not become a sinner, although He is identified with the nature of sinful men.

It is because He bears sin upon His own sinless Person that He has a right to "take away" our sin and its consequences. So the Evangelist quoted the words of Isaiah, as being fulfilled by our Lord, in that He healed the sick. "Bearing" includes, at least potentially, the further idea of "bearing away." He bears our weakness with power to bear it away.

I. The Sight of a Personal Saviour.

The object of the Christian Ministry is not satisfied by the conception of a Divine power of grace. There must be a vision of the Incarnate God—an opening of Heaven.

I. Penitence does not look merely for justice, pardon, grace. It looks to find rest in a Personal Saviour. There is no satisfaction until we can say, "I see the Son of Man on the Right Hand of God." Penitence, purifying the heart, opens the eye of the soul to behold God. Martyrdom, witnessing to Divine Truth even unto death, attains the

vision. The ministry of penitence is not to make people feel their sins, but to see their Saviour. Without this vision, penitence is selfish, proud, earthly.

This vision lifts up the penitent with a necessity of living for the glory of God. The penitence is self-forgetful, humiliating, Divine.

The Psalmist says, "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned." Sin can only be known and felt as a disturbance of the loving personal relationship between the soul and God. The depth of the penitence will be in proportion to the manifestation of that relationship in its personal character, so that the disturbance may be felt with equal power.

After the first sin of Adam there was shame and terror. He heard the Voice of God, but He could no longer see God. There was, however, no penitence. There was, indeed, nothing which could draw him towards God, for he had no reason to think that God would welcome him back if he sought for pardon. He had snapped the bond of love, and he could not heal the breach. Nothing could recall him unless it could awaken in him a sense of love towards the Being Whom he had outraged. That love could not spring up within his heart unless he knew that love towards himself was still an active force in the Almighty Father Whose sonship he had forfeited. Such endurance

of Divine Love must have seemed to him altogether inconceivable. Satan had him in his power. He felt himself to be Satan's slave, a child, no longer of God, but of that fallen creature on whom the wrath of God was resting, the rebel for whose overthrow he had been created. Return to the Divine sonship, recovery from this poisonous slavery, seemed to be impossible.

The restoration of love had to begin upon the side of God. "We love Him, because He first loved us."

So was it still as time went on. The development of penitence could only be as God revealed Himself, calling man back with tokens of love still true. The heart of man could not give itself to God with loving hope unless God quickened the assurance that He would give Himself back to the returning prodigal with loving welcome. What man had lost was nothing less than God Himself. There could be no returning effort of penitence unless there could be an expectation of recovering the substantive reality of union with God in everlasting life.

The Law was given by Moses, and it had the shadow of good things to come, but not the very image of the things. There was no nation which God had in like manner called out so that He should come and dwell in the midst of them. The terrors of the Law were given, not to repel, but to

attract. There was a hidden presence of loving relationship speaking through these terrors, and calling man to become worthy of the Divine fellowship. The Mercy-seat hidden behind the Veil was waiting until the victorious Sacrifice should appear, Who should claim to rend the Veil asunder and open the way into the Holiest, bringing with Him a people cleansed and renewed, a regenerate people, the seed of the Lord.

So, in due time, God declared "His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." He died to give us higher life.

The coming of Christ in the Flesh was therefore the fullest call to repentance. It was a call coming from God, inviting us to return with all the hopes of a perfect restoration. God did not meet us half-way, for we could not have stirred by ourselves to make our half-way movement to meet Him. He came right down to us, and showed us here in our nature the reality of His Eternal Love, that we might rise up as partakers of His Divine Nature to rejoice in the renewal of that love.

S. John the Baptist proclaimed the nearness of the Kingdom of Heaven. That Kingdom came in the Person of the King. He did not come to win the Kingdom from the earth. He brought it in Himself. It was to be developed from Himself. This approaching manifestation of God's goodness

should call all men to repentance. The Baptist was the predicted Voice which should prepare the way before the Lord the King.

The King appears.

Is He to be served because of His power?

The Baptist had a higher message than that.

He comes in weakness. He comes to die. He comes to take upon Himself the sin of the world.

Here was the full revelation of the love of God. Here was the full call to penitence. "God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish"—by the debt of nature under Satan's tyranny—"but have everlasting life" in the sonship of God (S. John iii. 16).

The sight of the love of God must ever melt the heart in penitence. What if the multitude would flee from the wrath to come? Who hath warned them? Alas! they flee, but they drag the wrath along with them. They do not get quit of it. They remain a "generation of vipers." They have no desire of the Kingdom, no love for it. Until Christ is seen, the love of God remains unknown. Men flee from wrath, but flee in vain. They flee not to Love, to the Lamb of God, the Saviour. Him we must see! Him we must follow!

S. John saw Jesus passing by. Jesus comes near to us before we come near to Him. His approach

must awaken penitence, and change the mere self-seeking of natural morality into the adoring love of Divine thankfulness.

2. Who is it that warns us to flee from the wrath to come? Whither shall we flee? The rocks cannot hide us. No fleeing *from death* unless it be a fleeing *to life*! Yes! to Him Who has Eternal Life, to the Triune God in Whose fellowship our eternal Life consists, and therefore to the Son of God, in Whom that Life is communicated!

Fleeing from death is fleeing to life; and life is love: for God is our life, and God is Love. "Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."

The soul which catches the first impulse of the love of God is stirred by that love. God, Who formed us to love Himself and to find our happiness in loving, sees if we are unhappy because we do not love Him. Blessed are they whom the creature does not satisfy! Woe to those who find their satisfaction in the creature! Every creature of God is good, but every creature whose goodness holds us back from God by the satisfaction which it gives, is to us an evil, however great its goodness in itself may be. Therefore are riches and all earthly goods so harmful to us. Not because we misuse them, so much as because we rest satisfied in them, even when we use them for good purposes.

S. John pointed his disciples to Christ. We must come to Christ that we may have life from Him in personal devotion. He would have us follow Himself. He always makes as if He would go further, because He wants us to go further. Every act of spiritual progress is an exercise of the love which is our regenerate life. God leads us onward in penitence so that we are more and more dissatisfied with ourselves. So He leads us onward in the fellowship and experience and joy of His own Divine love. Our love to Him is His own living power of love operating in us. So we are led onward to the true end of our creation, which is, to rejoice in Him. We are lifted out of this dead world to live in God. Love is not measured by reason. The thoughts of this dead world never lose the bondage of their death. Love knows no measure but itself. Love sees the love of Christ transcending all its efforts. Love longs for that which is ever beyond itself, and finds its satisfaction in being led onward by the inspiration of Divine love, so that every act of love wakens a fresh vision of loving life. So the soul follows Christ, spends the day with Him—yes! not one day, but day after day, in fresh delight of love that is inexhaustible. So does Christ, dwelling in the loving soul, lead the soul onward to dwell for evermore in God.

II. *The Knowledge of Lowliness preparing for the Knowledge of Glory.*

S. John pointed His disciples to the Incarnate Son of God in His humiliation. We as Christ's ministers have to point our people to the same Son of God, glorified at the Right Hand of the Father. He was then returning victorious from His endurance of Satan's assault in the wilderness. Now He is ascended triumphant, having vanquished Satan in Hell.

I. The penitent must come to Him in His humiliation—follow Him step by step in His endurance—His Cross and Passion. Then shall he follow Him in the glory of His Ascension. They who will not seek Christ in His lowliness cannot find him in His glory. We must know Him as taking away our own sins, ere we can rejoice to know Him as giving to us the glory of the Divine Sonship.

We cannot know or behold Christ, unless we see our own sinfulness in the light of His redeeming fellowship. Then we shall behold Him as the Light of Light, in Whose Light we are called to be children of Light, partakers of His Holiness.

In His Light we must learn to see our own darkness; then we shall attain "in His Light to see Light," even the Light of God's Holiness. We often think we see our sins; but if we see them

not in the Light of Jesus, we know them only with the blind sense of touch. We are groping in the darkness. When the Light of Jesus shines, we see our sins in all their horror. Then we come to hate them, for the Light of Jesus has revealed to us the glory of God.

2. The means of Grace are given to us to raise us out of sin into the light of Divine Glory. We cannot have a true estimate of the grace which they convey, if our eye rests upon them instead of rising through them to Him Whose grace they confer.

In all approach to Christ there must be the upward-looking of the soul to the Personal Glorified Saviour, the Same Who "passed by" in the earlier dispensation of penitence, but is now seated for ever at the Right Hand of God.

There is no meeting Him half-way,—we in our sinfulness, He in His glory. He takes us up into the fulness of that glory where He dwells.

The dispensation of grace is not a modification of Christ's glory, but a communication of that glory to us, that we may be glorified in Him.

We are not healed in order to be glorified, but we are glorified in order to be healed. When the healing is complete, the blindness of sin done away, then will be the manifestation of the Son of God.

"It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but

when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." We shall see Him as He is, because in our Baptism we were made consubstantially one with Him ; so that our regenerate nature has a faculty for contemplating every element of His Nature wherein He is glorified.

3. The Sacraments of grace often lose their value, because we *rest* in the grace which they convey instead of *rising up* to the Person of Him from Whom the grace comes, and recognizing that grace as streaming down to us immediately from the Throne of His glory.

He cannot give grace, while "passing by." The power of giving grace is inherent in Him, because He has left the world and is gone unto the Father.

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

III. *Christ an Object of Apprehension to our Whole Nature.*

We have to behold Christ with *every* faculty of our regenerate nature. It is not merely the eye which sees Him. In the Heavenly glory the risen body acts with a combined energy of all faculties, which in the natural body operate through several senses.

1. To see, to hear, to smell, to taste, to touch—are all one act of faith operating through illuminating grace.

So does our whole nature behold Christ by grace—body, soul, and spirit. So we “hold the Head.” So we “taste how gracious the Lord is.” So we hear the Voice speaking. So we “turn to see the Voice” of Him that speaketh with us (Rev. i. 12). Our whole nature, with all its faculties, must thus behold the Lamb of God.

2. The Prophet stretched Himself upon the body of the dead child in order to *give* him life.

We have, in like manner, to stretch ourselves in submission to the glorified Body of Him that quickeneth us, in order that we may *receive* life. A vague gift of grace from a formless Saviour would be inefficacious. We have to feel the whole Glorified Being of Christ infused into our several members, so that Christ may live in us. So do we behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the evil of sin and death, which is spread over us. He makes our uncleanness to pass away, and the pure, incorruptible substance of His saving virtue becomes our life, our joy.

The child sneezed seven times. The restoration of life is the gradual work of the Sevenfold Spirit ; but though gradual in its progress, it is not piecemeal in its operation. The whole nature partakes of the progressively manifested life ; and the

deadness of sin is sloughed off, by reason of the vitality which fills the frame.

“The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Gal. ii. 20). So wrote the Apostle. His outward fleshly body hung round about him as a garment that he was ready to put off; but he himself was living indissolubly in the glorified Humanity of Christ, hidden within this perishing robe of flesh, quickening him with all the sensibilities of the Divine Sonship, in the full consciousness of reciprocal love,—the love of the Father to himself in Christ, the love of Christ in himself to the Father by the power of the Holy Ghost.

MEDITATION XVI.

WHERE DWELLEST THOU?

The two disciples went, following Jesus, to see where He dwelt.

I. *The Dwelling-place of Jesus.*

WE must seek to dwell with Jesus, if we would profit by beholding Him. To behold Him passing by, and not follow Him—to know where He dwells, and not to come and see—to see for a few moments, and not spend the whole day of life along with Him—were indeed worse than never to have known or heard His Name.

I. We must *follow* Jesus, if we would know where He dwells. If we follow Him sincerely—having a real interest in Him, as a penitent in the Saviour of the world, instructed by the Baptist, and looking for the promised salvation—He will not fail to welcome us.

Our desire must not be a *passing curiosity*, but a desire to know where He may be found abidingly.

It was a wondrous instinct of supernatural love which drew those two disciples to follow Jesus. They may be taken as representatives of the active and contemplative life. Jesus had not called them, but it was the true result of their Master's teaching that they should follow Jesus. There was no change of discipleship. They did not leave S. John the Baptist in dissatisfaction. To be dissatisfied with anything except ourselves is always a mark of evil. They did not leave their master as if they needed him no more. They left him because they felt themselves to be sinners, and this is He that beareth the sin of the world. What those words of Isaiah meant we may dispute in the glare of controversial exegesis. Those two disciples could have no idea beyond that of a trustful reliance upon Him as the promised Redeemer, upon Whom the chastisement of our peace was resting. The Kingdom of Heaven was at hand, but they knew not what was implied in that announcement. Their teacher had trained them to look forward to Him Who was to come. Looking to Him means loving Him. Loving Him means following Him.

A mysterious future rises up before their hearts as they follow Him. They cannot formulate any anticipations respecting that future intellectually. They must act true to the instincts of love which their Master has awakened within them. They

follow Christ, not as expecting something from Him, but because He was Himself. They know not what to expect. Their very question shows it. "Rabbi, where dwellest Thou?"

2. Yet He has not where on earth to lay His Head. Really to know this is the truest knowledge of His dwelling. His dwelling is a fixt dwelling, although not in any fixt or outward locality of earth. We must follow Him into the spiritual life, if we would know. They who can say, "Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place" (Ps. xc. 1), will find His dwelling-place in the Bosom of the Father. When He says to us, "Come and see," He says, "Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter." If He calls us to Himself in some earthly Form, it is that He may draw us up unto Himself in His unchanging Glory.

We are not told where those two disciples were privileged to spend that day with Jesus. We may be sure there was no fixt home to which He brought them. As they sat, probably in some cave of the wilderness, He taught them of the things above. He opened their eyes to see heavenly mysteries. His words would tell of Divine truth in all its fullness, but their hearts would be able to receive very little of its spiritual reality. The defect of manifestation was not in His insufficient utterance, but in their defective following. They had followed

Him with devout affections, but still their hearts were earthly. We know how earthly were their conceptions of the coming Kingdom even after three years' training under His care. Now He says to them, "Come and see." It was in proportion as they came that they would be able to see. As their hearts could rise up and follow Him in spiritual fellowship, so would be their understanding of His words.

Oh let us follow Jesus !

We must not look for anything to abide on earth as the Home where Jesus shall be manifested. He is ever seen on the banks of Jordan as One Who is "passing by." If we would see where He dwells, we must follow Him to the Bosom of the Father, follow Him in entire detachment from earthly longings, follow Him with an absorbing adoration towards His own Person, follow Him with no preconceptions, follow Him to the Cross, follow Him in the buried life, follow Him through the Grave, follow Him to the Right Hand of the Father.

The Bosom of the Father is the Home of His eternal dwelling, and the end of His earthly pilgrimage. That is the end which He has always present to His Mind and Heart. If we would follow Him, that end must always be present to us.

Oh, to dwell in that absorbing love to God

wherein Jesus dwelt! He dwelt therein by the power of the Holy Ghost. He calls us to do the same; dwelling in Himself by the same Spirit wherein He lives, the Spirit of Eternal Love towards the Father.

The earthly dwelling of Jesus is not a dwelling of earthly repose or stationary shelter. "He dwells eternally in the secret place of the Most High, and lodges under the shadow of the Almighty" (Ps. xc. 1). However lonely in outward seeming, He is ever acting in Divine power. He dwells as the Divine Word, ever accomplishing the Father's Will.

We must not think that God is always with us in order to do *our* will; God always abides with us to enable us to do *His* Will. So must we see how Christ dwells in holy obedience to the Father, and the Father is ever acting along with Him.

Often do our acts fail, not through fault of outward matter, but by defect of Divine subordination and therefore of Divine co-operation. Whatever is not wrought in God must fail of accomplishing the purpose of God. Every act of life must be done from God in holy obedience, in God by the grace of Christ, for God by the self-oblation of the Spirit of love.

II. *The Hour.*

It was about the tenth hour.¹ This is the hour of the Holy Ghost's descent. It is in the power of the Holy Ghost that we follow Christ, and speak with Him.

1. We must know Him as our "Teacher." He teaches us by the Holy Ghost. To know Him merely as if He were a Jewish Rabbi, were of no avail. We need that learning from Him which He gained from no man, and which no man can give to us.

2. It is a learning which can only be acquired by obedience, following Him. He gives this learning, as an intuition to His faithful followers, "Come and see."

"I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee."

The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of revelation, whereby the things of the Kingdom of Heaven are revealed to those who follow Jesus.

The mystical teaching of Holy Scripture, and the predictions which the Holy Ghost inspired, are apt to move the world's scorn instead of elevating the heart to God, because they are so often treated as a technicality, a worldly artifice. They are foolishness to the natural heart because they

¹ Remember that S. John's hours are reckoned from midnight to noon, not as the other Evangelists', from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

appeal to the spiritual instincts. Mysticism develops a wonderful form in the Word of God. The loving intelligence finds therein a true creation of Divine poetry which lights up the whole Volume of inspiration with a new power. The various parts of Holy Scripture spring into new signification by combination in setting forth the eternal mysteries of the Incarnate Word. Passages rise into clear lustre, which, but for the glow of heavenly interpretation, would seem to be dull and purposeless in the Divine Volume.

When the Voice of God is heard speaking mystically in Holy Scripture, then the events, through which it speaks, rise altogether beyond the sphere of mere earthly narrative or accidental illustration. The Life of God, which holds all the parts of Holy Scripture in such marvellous unity of teaching, gives to each detail a manifestation of beauty and meaning. As some beautiful melody may be made to express varied sentiments by tenderness of touch and variety of accentuation, so the same passage of Holy Scripture will speak with varied signification to the reader according to the needs of his position when reading it. The Voice of the loving Father speaks to each and all. Human sentiments lose this vitality in the transmission of a mere manuscript, but the Words of God live for ever with the Spirit of God by Whose power they were originally formulated. But then "Holy Scripture must be

read in the power of the same Spirit wherewith it was written." The spiritual intelligence will rejoice in reading Holy Scripture, as one who, being instructed in a cypher, understands a message brought by a servant in quite a different sense from that which the uninstructed messenger supposes to be in the words. The words speak to the listening soul, not of earth, but of Heaven.

It is not enough for us to believe in the inerrancy of Holy Scripture by reason of its inspiration. We must experience the power of that inspiration coming to us through the words of men of old, speaking in our hearts while we read them. We need not doubt that if we seek this prayerfully and lovingly, we shall find it abundantly. We must read with the conviction that God had a Divine purpose of teaching for ourselves in that particular passage which we read. Especially is this to be recognized in the appointed lections of the Church. Then the inspiration of Holy Scripture rises above the level of a controverted dogma. It becomes for us a living fact, a power of experience, a thrilling delight. As we read, Jesus calls us onward : "Come and see."

III. *The Words of Jesus to the two Disciples.*

What would we give to hear the words which Jesus spoke as He taught Andrew and the other disciple during that day !

1. Yes. The world would be curious to know the words. Why has not God caused them to be recorded? The world would be no better, if it had the words. The faithful have the Word Himself—the Speaker. He will speak through His written Word, and will unfold its meaning by the power of the Holy Ghost. The wisdom which the Holy Ghost teacheth is helpful to us. No intellectual *exegesis* of prophecy would bring any conviction of truth to the heart without the Holy Ghost. Therefore, indeed, it is one of the very dangers of the day, that men seek to know Jesus only after the flesh, by outward criticism; and not by spiritual and affectionate submission, and persevering contemplation.

The accidents of the outer life tend rather to obscure than to enhance the revelation of the Incarnate Son of God. They are but the terrestrial drapery of the Incarnation, suitable for the moment, but void of all relationship to the Divine Person of Jesus. Therefore does Holy Scripture leave us uninformed of so many things which we would so gladly know. Holy Scripture seeks to set before us the spiritual and Divine character of the Redeemer. Only those events are recorded which have some dogmatic importance for us. It is of no importance for us to know what had reference only to the transitory surroundings of those with whom He had to do. All that is merely

pictorial leads the mind away from the eternal sublimity of the Agent. "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now from henceforth know we Him no more" (2 Cor. v. 16).

The interest which the present age takes in the accuracy of Biblical illustration is no token of real spiritual elevation of the heart to God. Nor was the Crusading enthusiasm of a previous age. That which localizes the acts of the Eternal dwarfs the Infinite to the mere relationships of time. Any place in the world is as much the Tomb of Christ as the actual rock, if it could be ascertained, in which His Body was laid for three days. We must seek to behold the Life and Death of Christ reproduced in the details, and amidst the surroundings, of our daily life, wherever we may be. Earth, time, and space vanish from before the soul which holds real communion with God in His Eternal, Infinite Truth. This is where Jesus dwells, and we must rise out of all notions of the pictorial, phenomenal apprehension, so as to dwell with Jesus in the substantial, eternal power of His glorification.

So the Sacramental forms, under which Christ gives us His Body and Blood, communicate the essential Presence the more freely because they do not bring before us the transitory appearance in which He showed Himself before His Ascension. The Substance of the glorified Humanity is the same that it was in the time of humiliation; but

the form which was proper to that time of humiliation is not consistent with the glorious conditions of the Right Hand of God.

One of these two disciples speaks of having seen with his eyes, and contemplated, the Word of Life. He does not show Him to us in the imperfect subjectivity of that sight wherewith he saw, but in the substantive reality of the Person Who thus revealed Himself. That changeless One is ready to reveal Himself to each one of us now, and He can do so just as truly, now that He is at the Right Hand of God, as He could in the days of His humiliation, when He was passing by, and the two disciples followed Him. But any form suited to the subjectivity of our apprehension is a limitation of the glory wherein He dwells and acts. It is not a clearer manifestation of His true Being, such as will be vouchsafed, even to ourselves, when our nature is expanded under the conditions of that glory.

So it is in the Apocalypse. S. John sets Christ before us in symbolic form suitable for the act under which he would reveal Him to us; but the Human Form with the fiery Sword of the Spirit proceeding from His Mouth, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Ram as it had been slain, the Child caught up to Heaven, are forms of thought not of such reality as our finite sense can appropriate. He is careful not to speak of the Lamb of God by the

same title of tender suffering which he employs in his Gospel. He is still the Lamb, but He is glorified. The successive visions are not a succession of portraits, but like a series of dissolving views, in which the same Person appears in the Form suited to the occasion, but identical with the previous manifestation. A Lion is celebrated. The Lion appears as a Ram that has been slain.

This remembrance helps us, in reading the Old Testament, to recognize Jesus Christ, the Same yesterday and to-day and for ever, as the living, substantive Personality, which appears in one typical Form after another, but always acting true to Himself, and carrying out the great design of the Father—the Redemption of human nature from the tyranny of Satan.

2. The spiritual utterance of Holy Scripture nourishes and illuminates the loving and adoring heart ; but it is of no avail to such as would use it—*not* at the tenth hour—*not* in the hour of the Holy Ghost—*not* so as to abide with Christ all that day—*not* with faithful perseverance cherishing His word.

MEDITATION XVII.

THE LOSS OF SELF IN THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

“He must increase, but I must decrease.” What is earthly must pass away. The heavenly remains and is glorified.

I. The Glory of Christ must cause the True Messenger to disappear.

I. S. JOHN knew his earthly ministry to be but transitory. He did not look to achieve glory for himself. He would not attain to a great glory, and then die. He would fade away in the glory of the brighter Day, in which he would find the true lustre for which he longed. He would bring no glory to Jesus. He would receive all glory from Him.

This must be the law of all faithful ministry. And yet how difficult it is to put away all thoughts of personal greatness, and rest simply in the out-shining of Divine grace in Christ! That is because we do so little realize the Divine character of the glory of Christ. The gas-light cannot shine in the

bright noon. The human elements of glory cannot shine in the presence of Christ's manifestation. Too often in the very effort to glorify Christ, the real glory of Christ is obscured. The thick veil of our natural imagination makes a night in which man can be glorified, but Christ is lost sight of. Many stars become visible filling the dark heavens with beauty, but it is because the sunlight is gone. This is true of every form of human effort whereby we fain would glorify Christ—Reason, Eloquence, Art, Wealth. In so far as earthly success tends to glorify man, it is generally by the hiding of the supernatural, the Divine, glory of Christ. The room is darkened for the stereopticon-pictures, but the pictures are nothing. So for the most part it is with human endeavours to glorify Christ. Christ is glorified only by the power of the Holy Ghost. That glory is an increasing, and an eternal glory. Self is lost in that glory. That glory increases to the fulness of the stature of Christ. The individual is lost in the Communion of Saints. Each rejoices, not in himself, but in the totality of the undivided glory ; for that glory is a living glory possessed by all in common.

II. *S. John rejoiced to decrease before Christ.*

I. Such was the ministry of a true love, having Christ for its object, and therefore heedless of self.

We must take care that we rejoice in the growth of Christ for His sake, without reference to any effort of our own. So S. Paul speaks: "Whether it were I, or they."

This applies not only to our own personal share in the work of Christ, but to all that is round about us. We must be detached from things which may seem to be of great importance. All earthly things have to be surrendered joyfully to the supernatural glory of Christ. While we cling to anything, however good, we make it an obstacle to Christ's glory.

So S. Paul speaks of the loss of all things, "that we may win Christ, and be found in Him."

2. What has helped us to find Christ, too often holds us back; so that when we have found Him, we will not lay hold of Him. S. John had to decrease—to die—ere he could lay hold upon Christ. We must accept the decrease, ere we can be taken into the increase. S. John did not receive the higher gifts of Christ in order to reassure him in his own decrease. Had he needed such assurance it would have been plain that he had not the spiritual hold upon the increasing glory of Christ which alone could make his own ministry of any value to him. By losing hold upon earthly things he was to gain the firm possession of the eternal verities revealed in Christ.

He sent His disciples to Christ that Christ

might give them, by His Divine utterance, the assurance which no human testimony could give. If they were inclined to despond because Jesus did not help their master in his bondage, the very question they were to ask showed that the Baptist's ministry was a transitory one. If they would learn the lesson which their master taught, they must be looking forward to a prophet who should replace him. "He that should come." Jesus might or might not be he. Anyhow the Baptist was to give way to another.

They were to accept Jesus as the true, abiding Prophet, not merely upon the strength of S. John's testimony, but by the demonstrations of the Spirit and of power in Jesus Himself. To know Jesus upon the strength of S. John's assertions would be a knowledge having all the weakness of the human speaker. Indeed, we are too easily satisfied with a natural faith in Christ. But that is merely intellectual. A philosopher may write an unanswerable book of Christian Evidences, and yet not have that living, experimental faith in Christ, faith fully quickened and informed by love, which alone is of any value.

The evidences are necessary by way of preparation, but they must lead on to experience of vital truth. So the Samaritans said, "No longer because of thy talking. Now we have heard ourselves, and know that this is Christ, the Saviour of the world"

(S. John iv. 42). John looks to Jesus, rests upon Jesus, gives way to Jesus, sends his disciples that Jesus may teach them respecting Himself. So nature must ever look to grace as all-sufficient, reason to faith. If we would, as Christian Priests, teach our people the things of Christ, we must lose ourselves, and lead them, send them, to Christ, that He Himself may teach them all things. So shall Christ be made known to them in the power of Divine Love.

3. The loss of earthly things has to be accepted in love, and then the higher, heavenly delight will be subsequently vouchsafed. The earthly loss would not be felt, if the Divine gift came first. S. John heard in the prison the works of Christ. If Christ had visited him in the prison with supernatural gifts, the merit of that imprisonment would have been forfeited, the work of faith would have been superseded. Without such decrease, as a trial of faith, we cannot be found worthy of the increase, which is the reward of love.

S. John was not only to decrease by a law of physical necessity. His decrease was the appointed pathway by which he should attain to the fulness of personal glory, wherein his ministerial glory should be consummated. If he had not seen the things of earth die from before his eyes, he could not have opened his eyes to the coming glory of the Kingdom whereof he taught. That glory was

to be found only in Christ. By dying he would go to his fathers, and there he would await until He that should come would indeed come, and deliver him and them from the dark prison-house of the grave. His cry in the wilderness would have only been like the rustle of reeds shaken by the wind if he had been secured from the earthly doom. He was sent to prepare the way of Christ on earth. Christ would prepare a place where he should be with Him in Heaven. He was not the friend of the Bridegroom by reason of gifts which were promised, but by reason of the love which he had to the Bridegroom, as the Incarnate Son of God.

He was not to hold earthly fellowship with Christ, although they were so closely bound together, both by the ties of nature, and in the relationship of their ministerial offices. He rejoiced in the Bridegroom with the simplicity of love, looking forward to have fellowship with Him in the glory of the Kingdom to be revealed hereafter. He must show himself worthy to be with Christ there, by accepting the difficulties of nature which were appointed for him here.

So it is with us now. Our fellowship with Christ needs many limitations; but they are the limitations of our circumstances, not the limitations of His Love. Amidst our limitations we must realize by faith the fulness of His infinite love. He is as truly with us as if we could be more sensible of

His Presence. We have to look to Him unseen. He sees us, loves us, cares for us. He is all the while preparing us for the manifestation which shall be granted if we persevere. The whole world under every possible aspect is a prison-house to the friend of the Bridegroom, who is waiting for the Bridegroom to come and call away to the heavenly banquet those who are waiting that they may come in with Him to the wedding.

But oh, how sweet is the Bridegroom's Voice to the loving ear of penitent faith! The poor have the Gospel of the Kingdom preached to them. "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God." He comes to "make atonement for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." The wilderness blossoms as the rose when the Voice of the Creator speaks therein, removing the cause of barrenness which man's sin had brought, and making the trees of the field to rejoice in fruitfulness. Surely creation is wedded in a new life to the Incarnate Word. He only asks of us to receive Him in poverty of spirit, seeking no wealth but the riches of His grace. The Bridegroom calls. He is the Lord of Life. By dying to the world of death we find the life of the Kingdom which is in Him. All earthly sounds are hushed, except the hatred wherewith a sinful world must ever be pursuing those who would be true to Him. The voice of comfort resounds beyond the bars of the grave. He who

would prepare the way in the wilderness, must go forward through the darkness to be with the Lamb, the Bridegroom, 'on the High Mountain (Is. xl. 10; Rev. xix. 1). Faith catches the sound of the blessed song which is the joy of the Heavenly Zion. There is the Voice of the Bridegroom heard wakening an outburst of holy joy that cannot die, the song of Moses and the Lamb. The prisoners of hope exult in the triumph of redeeming Love; while the redeemed of every nation claim the inheritance of the blessing of Abraham, for God hath provided for Himself a Lamb, and the expansive song of praise in countless chorus celebrates the love of God, and the triumph of Jesus Christ.

Blessed is the prison-house of the penitent while he waits for the Lord of Righteousness to welcome him with the benediction which persevering faith shall win.

III. *We must learn the Worthlessness of Worldly Things, by witnessing their Decrease.*

I. All Judea had followed S. John. What was that following worth? It was worth much, if they left him for Christ. If they clung to him, it was worth nothing. They left him, but they did not go to Christ.

This only showed that they had never known the purpose of his ministry. Better then that they

should go away, than that Christ should be mocked by a formalism which only hated Christ in its heart. They could accept John as a Prophet of Messiah, for they could *make* a Messiah for themselves. They could not accept Messiah when He came, for He called them to take up their cross and follow Him.

2. It is difficult for us to realize, that, though the earthly may prepare the way for the heavenly, it must die in its prison before the heavenly can be manifested. Too often it dies in its prison, rebelling against that very heavenly object for which it once prepared the way. But so it is. There always must be decrease of the earthly—a death—before the heavenly can be manifested, the true life.

A spread of Christianity must be followed by an apostasy of some sort or other. It is only the remnant which ever can be saved.

Various forms of renaissance may have their value, but they will not tend towards an uninterrupted increase of true Christianity.

The earthly element will ever be predominating over the spiritual. The earthly attractiveness must pass away in corruption.

We are not to disparage spiritual revivals within the Church because they are not continuously progressive. They accomplish God's purpose for the salvation of many souls during their continuance. Many hear the voice of God, even

though many are led by the fashion of the day, as the Pharisees who came to John. Those who profit by the prophetic voice will probably belong to a class that are scorned by the religious world of the day, whatever the fashion of that religious world may be. Nevertheless, God knoweth them that are His. The ministry of the Baptist was not a success because of the multitudes that flocked to it, but because of those reclaimed souls who were raised out of sin and shame. The general stir of the movement was hushed. The Forerunner and the Redeemer seemed both of them to have passed away, and the spiritual movement seemed coming to nought. But it was not so. God's work had been done, not for that generation alone, but for all future time.

Every subsequent movement does its work in the kingdom of grace in like manner, whether it be small or great. Some hearts are touched by Divine Love though all around be dead. A witness is borne for which the generation is responsible, whether it accept the witness or no. When the world sinks back in its earthliness, the grace of God waits for awhile. God has spoken, and if the world reject His Voice the darkness deepens. Again and again God speaks, and He will be less heard as time goes on. At last He will speak in judgment. It is no longer the Bridegroom calling to the

wedding, but the Judge calling His rebellious subjects to be slain.

What a time it will be, when the few faithful ones, in their several prison-houses of solitude, are waiting for the Judge to appear and destroy their enemies! Oh, how have they suffered for the love of the Bridegroom! How has He, though they saw Him not, watched over them in their needs! In all time of spiritual distress, personal or ecclesiastical, individual or collective, how must we be looking to Jesus; not disappointed because He seems to leave us, but relying upon His security, because we know His word is sure.

“Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me.”

It is a call of the Love of God when He exposes us to the antagonism of a sinful world for the purification of our faith. To live at a time of crisis, of witness, of martyrdom, must ever be a token of a special call. God in His love will strengthen us for every emergency, whether it be greater or less. God does not give the full martyr's grace to those who have only the ordinary difficulties of life to cope with. He will certainly give us what grace we need. We must use it. He does not give us any grace to spare. If He did, the whole value of our suffering would be destroyed. We dare not complain of anything, nor dare we boast of any sufficiency of natural will. In our

prison-house we must appeal to Jesus Himself. He will instruct us to rely upon Himself and be at peace.

As troubles come, we must prepare for more, and we must accept the discipline of faith in thankfulness.

We know not how great the apostasy may be which some of us living now may witness. We must look to see the Church at large entirely set aside, whether seeming to exist or not. There must be the decrease proportionate to the increase. The Cross must stand alone upon the earth, with the small gathering of such as were round it on Calvary.

Then, and not till then, will the Sign of the Son of Man be seen in Heaven, and He shall be glorified in all His Saints whom He will bring along with Himself, in the fulness of His glory.

We are not to look for manifestations of Divine power to make natural faith easier; but we must learn to die to all natural anticipations, that we may have our portion in the supernatural inheritance of the faithful.

MEDITATION XVIII.

SENSIBLE ENCOURAGEMENT.

Jesus passed by. It does not seem that He ever spoke with S. John after His baptism. He left him to fulfil his work.

I. *The Absence of Jesus.*

THERE was greater love manifested in such absence than would have belonged to personal interviews. He could trust to S. John to fulfil his ministry without human approbation or intercourse.

I. How the heart of S. John must have longed for converse with Jesus! Yet he knew that the absence was not occasioned by want of love. He learnt to love Jesus all the more by not seeing Him. He learnt to trust Him. My soul hath longed for Jesus, and I have a good hope because of Thy word.

So we must learn to accept the discipline of love, if Jesus gives no sensible tokens of His Presence.

He may give to some the sweet interior delight of converse with Himself.

He may give outward evidence of co-operation by success in what is entrusted to us.

Some may be profited by such encouragements.

It is a higher law of love by which He says, "Am I not better unto thee than ten sons? Outward encouragement brings with it much danger. Rest in Me."

"But if I cannot see Thy Glory, as some seem to see it, and hear Thy Voice?"

"Think not that any see and hear because I love them more than thee. That is worthless, if it be the mere gratification of outward intellect. Rest in Me. Those find My love most truly, whose life is hidden with Me in God, hidden from others, hidden from themselves. Measure not My love by thine experience; but as thou hast ministered unto Me, and hast seen Me passing by, be content to see Me no more until thou pass away. So shalt thou see Me in My glory, and abide with Me for ever."

Thus must the faithful soul learn to live in God's love by the discipline of hiddenness.

It may often seem as if our ministry to others were for them, and not for ourselves.

S. John bore witness to Jesus, not after the measure of personal human friendship, but in the adoring and unchangeable contemplation of Jesus as the Son of God. So with us. "Truly my soul waiteth in stillness upon God, for of Him cometh

my salvation." As I know the truth of the Incarnate Godhead, I must look to find in Him a love that is altogether Divine.

Earth must vanish away ere I can see Him as He is. Once to have seen Jesus, is a Vision that the faithful soul needs not to have repeated, for it is a vision abiding to Eternal Life. "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace."

II. Patience when left in Solitude.

We are not to be solicitous that Jesus should show Himself to us by any outward tokens of His favour. We, upon our part, must be continually abiding in Him, though we see Him not. "Though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Manifestations are often deceitful. Many rejoice in them who have never grasped the substance. The substance of a life hidden with Christ in God is the fellowship wherein the Consubstantial Spirit binds us with Jesus in His Glory. We must be longing to depart and be with Christ, not eager for Christ to come down to our earthly level and be with us. It is better for us that He has gone unto the Father; for if He were not at the Right Hand of the Father, He could not raise us up to the fellowship of His Glory.

Moses could say, "Show me Thy Glory." We

must seek to have the Ascended Lord glorified in ourselves, whether by life or by death. We must not desire to see the Glory of Jesus naturally, for that is but an external vision. We must desire to be so crucified with Christ, that through the wounds of His Passion His Glory may shine forth in our lives. So must we follow Him with diligence, going on our way weeping, that we may return with Him in joy, and bring our sheaves of the heavenly harvest as His partners.

"Da mihi portare manipulum (sheaf) fletus atque doloris, ut cum exultatione recipiam mercedem laboris."

He who rejoiced at the Bridegroom's Voice must follow Him through the grave, to be with Him in that Upper Chamber where His Marriage Feast should be gloriously celebrated.

He had seen heaven opened for the glorification of Jesus. How intensely He must have longed to enter into that glory! We must labour that we may enter into that rest.

III. Fellowship with Jesus causing the World to forsake us.

While S. John preached repentance, the people flocked to him; for their penitence became their pride. When He preached Jesus, they forsook him, for they knew not themselves as sinners

needing the Lamb of God to redeem them. S. John was content to see the crowds fall away, for he knew full well how worthless was their demonstration.

1. He could rejoice in those who left him in order to follow Jesus. He could rejoice in those who fell away, because they had no penitence in their hearts. It was of no use that they should abide with him, unless he could hand them on to Jesus.

He was content that the witness by the Jordan should be changed into the witness of the prison-house.

2. The true encouragement of those who would see Jesus, is when they are called to increasing suffering on behalf of Jesus.

The world wonders that God's people are called to suffer. The faithful accept all suffering as being their chief encouragement, for they recognize it as the mark of God's children.

We must take up the Cross and follow Christ with a joyful heart. If we will not take up the Cross, we cannot look for any share in its triumph.

Our sorrows for the sake of Christ must be our chief encouragements—the tokens of His Love.

MEDITATION XIX.

RESULTS OF MINISTRY.

Those who left the Baptist to follow Christ—Andrew, John and others. Some ceasing from close personal intimacy. Some never intimate with him, but profiting by his words.

I. *The Surrender of Loved Companions to Jesus.*

Great was the joy of the Baptist in seeing the word which he had spoken made fruitful in the sanctification of his two disciples, as they gave themselves to Jesus.

He experienced the joy of Christ's fellowship in the very separation whereby they became Christ's disciples.

I. Others indeed clung to him instead of following Christ. Such were they whom he sent to ask Christ.

How gladly would he have been left of all, if only they would have chosen the greater Teacher!

How earthly he felt his words to be, since they would not give themselves to Christ! How he

felt their want of understanding, who still clung to him with earthly affection, instead of welcoming his words in their spiritual truth! He sends them to hear what Christ has to say. The word of Christ fails to move them. They see the miracles of Christ and report them. They remain unchanged.

2. Others were baptized by him, and were scattered abroad without ever hearing the truth of Christ's Ministry—as the disciples at Ephesus. Nevertheless, they had welcomed with spiritual affection that which they had heard. The fruit was not wanting, but it would not appear until many years after the prophet's death.

3. There were also many fashionable hearers. They came to confess and be baptized, and then return to enjoy themselves in the world of sin. Alas! Wo to Herod's court, against whose immorality he protested, so as to be put in prison, called for frequently to exercise his prophetic office, but receiving a homage which was more like the mockery of Samson, than a recognition of his character. See Herod doing many things at his suggestion, but held down by his sinful affection—inquisitive, superstitious, sensual. He watched the heart of Herod hardening. He knew not how, ere long, Herod would turn Jesus personally into public mockery.

II. *S. John the Baptist's Ministry—ending in Isolation and Death.*

1. What other ending could there be for him who was sanctified by the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb?

Separation from the world must be, for him, as complete as the sanctification was.

He had not the gift of the Holy Ghost to raise his disciples to a new life which he could share with them. It was impossible that they should understand him, or rise to his spiritual aims.

Those who were capable of this must leave him and go to Jesus, Who had the communicative Power of the Spirit, which John did not possess.

2. John could *point* them to the Life, but he could not *give* the life.

He was the last of those who should die in hope without receiving the promise, although the promise would spring into life through his own hands, as inaugurating it.

3. He was the friend of the Bridegroom, to prepare for the Sacramental Espousals whereby the Lord of Life should unite unto Himself His Bride the Church, redeemed from among the dead multitude on which he gazed.

He could have nothing of earth that he should take with him as a result of his life. They must be handed to Christ, to receive the new gift, if

they were to partake of the eternal Blessing which he proclaimed.

He himself must die, ere he could receive the gift of life. Death was to be to him, indeed, an earnest of the reward which awaited him. Death was the penalty of sin, from which his body could not be exempted. But then, death was to be to him a pledge of reward. He should die in sin, but for the Truth of life.

III. *The Spiritual Prerogatives of the Christian Ministry.*

Our ministry must share all that belonged to S. John ; but at the same time we are the instruments of Jesus, to minister the Holy Ghost in His Church, and so to give life, which S. John could not give.

1. We have to deal with men in the outward nature, for even those who are regenerated in Christ have still the earthly nature. We have to lead them to die to themselves. We have (as being in the same outward nature) to die *with* them, and *to* them ; and (as belonging to Christ in the inner nature) we have to die *in* Him, and *for* them (as He died) that we may lead them to live with ourselves in Him.

2. The Holy Ghost Whose Descent upon Christ was witnessed by S. John, inaugurating Christ for

His public Ministry, is the Power flowing onward to us as the ministers of Christ ; by Whom we are called to the supernatural ministration of grace, lifting men upward in the increasing experience of Christ's Ascended Sovereignty.

3. S. John saw not Christ after the opening days of his mission. We must constantly behold Christ in ourselves ; and lose sight of ourselves in Christ, in all our work. The strength of our witness is that we see Heaven opened, and the Son of Man standing at the Right Hand of God. We cannot minister worthily the gifts of grace which He has entrusted to us, unless we are keeping our eyes fixt upon the throne of His glory from whence all our strength must come, and our hearts continually filled with His Love.

4. S. John gave up his natural life *for* Christ. We must give up our natural life *to* Christ, that we may both experience in ourselves, and minister to others, the grace of the supernatural life in Christ. John knew the reality of that life, for he saw it manifested in Jesus. We must learn the reality of that life as being given to ourselves, so that the indwelling Jesus shall be manifested in all our words and actions. We cannot send others away from ourselves, to go to Jesus. Oh, how great is our responsibility, having Jesus in ourselves, to show Him forth in His truth to those whom He entrusts to our care !

MEDITATION XX.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

"He that entereth in by the door is the Shepherd of the sheep."

"The Lord is my Shepherd: therefore can I lack nothing."

"He shall feed His flock like a shepherd, and shall gently lead those that are with young."

THE Good Shepherd is an image which appeals with so much tender force to our nature that we are in danger of losing its real significance. Its constant representation in pictures encourages us to think of the phrase in a purely humanitarian aspect. This again is strengthened by our habit of looking to our Lord's suffering death as if that were the chief evidence of His Love, and forgetting the Divine Love which caused Him to take our suffering nature by becoming Incarnate.

The *Bonus Pastor* or *Good Shepherd* is, however, a very inadequate reading of the title which our Lord claims. It is a title which might be given to any shepherd who cared for the sheep. It does not imply that the sheep belong to Him in any special way. Neither again does it give any reason

why the sheep should be secured against the world by the Shepherd's death.

Our Lord claims to be the glorious Shepherd. His glory consists not in His tenderness towards the sheep: that is but an outcome of His glorious character. His glory consists in His Divine character. The sheep are His because He created them. As He created them, He cares for them. He lays down His earthly life, not to save the sheep from earthly danger, but that they may die along with Him and enter into the life where the wolf cannot hurt them. He is the Door into that heavenly life, for the sheep cannot enter into it save by incorporation into His Body as the means of access. Both Jew and Gentile being incorporated into Him become one new flock. The distinction of outward form, which characterized the Jewish covenant, has passed away. The new flock live with the glorious Life of the glorious Shepherd, for they are admitted in Him to the glory which characterizes Himself. They are made partakers of His Divine Nature because they have been baptized into His death, and are made members of Himself.

I. He is the Glorious Shepherd ruling over the Household of God.

a. The sheep are His, because He created them. They are not an accidental acquisition. They are

the embodiment of His Own Eternal Will in the fulness of His Infinite power. Whoso toucheth them, toucheth the apple of His Eye, for He has contemplated His flock with a predestinating gaze from the beginning, intending to make it the culminating manifestation of His Own glory.

b. He is training them for His glory that they may share it. Other shepherds feed their flock to slaughter them; they profit the shepherd by their death. Jesus feeds His flock that He may bring them out of death and make them partakers of His Own all-glorious life. The sheep of Christ can add nothing to what the Good Shepherd has in Himself. They are fed and perfected for higher aims of life by what He does for them.

c. The Good Shepherd puts His sheep in a place of difficulty, in order that they may the more truly share the glory which is to follow.

II. The Sheep are the Objects of Supernatural Care.

a. He is able to supply all their wants, for He is Almighty. He knows their wants. He desires to supply them. If He lets them feel any want, it is because He desires to draw them to look up to Himself for the supply.

He is always present with them so as to meet every emergency, and trains them thus to experience His Presence.

b. He gives them heavenly gifts as well as earthly ones. His gifts are not only such as the sheep require in their natural condition, but they are such as to fit them for the heavenly purposes of His love. His gifts transform their nature so that the sheep can follow the Shepherd in ways of supernatural life wherein He calls them. He Himself goes before them, strengthening them all the while to follow His steps.

c. He leads them in pastures and beside streams of refreshment, gladdening their nature with sweet joys of heavenly consciousness. He tends them with all the sympathy and care of One Who knows their weakness and suffering, for He Himself has borne that weakness. As His Divine Nature strengthened Him in His suffering, so, being God, He communicates to them the fellowship of His Spirit, and strengthens them, whatever may be the character of their suffering.

d. He laid down His life upon the Cross in order to deliver them from the enemy who had them under his power. For three-and-thirty years He lived in this sinful world exposed to all the tyranny of Satan. When He laid down His life He descended into Hell to bruise the Serpent's head. At the same time He opened the way into the kingdom of glory, that all those His sheep who follow Him might be safe from the assaults of the Evil One. The Prince of this world, the Serpent, the Wolf,

would be too strong for any earthly power to ward off. The sheep must perish if their Shepherd had only the life of this world. But Jesus has the two lives of Godhead and Manhood. When He laid down the life of Manhood, He did not forfeit the Divine life. As the Good Shepherd suffered by Manhood in all the ways in which the sheep could suffer, so by His Godhead He conquers the Enemy. The Evil One cannot harm those who abide under His protection.

e. The Shepherd has the glory, not only of Divine power, but of Divine triumph. He has conquered and goes on conquering from age to age, whatever may be the form of renewed assault in which the conquered Enemy assails the sheep. The sheep have to go through the Valley of the shadow of death where the power of darkness still seems to surround them, but that power is really gone. The Cross of Christ is a weapon of defence which the powers of darkness must acknowledge. Those who in their suffering associate themselves by faith with the victory achieved on Calvary, are sustained by God, Who will bruise Satan under their feet shortly. The rod and staff of the Good Shepherd are the comfort of the faithful, the one preserving from danger by holy discipline, the other communicating, to such as endure any suffering, the virtue and fellowship of the acceptable Oblation of Christ's Cross and Passion. There can be no comfort in this world so

great as the participation of suffering along with Christ, since He by suffering has opened to us the gate of everlasting life, and enables us therein to anticipate the heavenly joy. There is no glory to the sheep comparable with the glory of suffering in fellowship with the glorious Shepherd.

III. *The Good Shepherd is the Door of the Sheep, opening to them an Inner Sanctuary of Perfect Protection.*

a. It would have been of no avail for the Shepherd to lay down His life, if the sheep had been left at the mercy of the wolf when the Shepherd died. Christ, when He laid down His life, did not make the sheep safe in the world, where the wolf, although conquered, was still going about seeking whom he might devour. The results of the victory wait to be fully manifested at the last day. Meanwhile the sheep must learn to follow the Shepherd if they would find safety through Him. Those who are baptized into Him are admitted amongst His sheep. They are baptized into His death, so that they, by the power of the Spirit, are dead to the world of the wolf, and are taken into the kingdom of God. They are born again, and enter into a new sphere of life. The Human Nature of Christ is the door of admission by which they are admitted into the

fellowship of His Divine Nature and the Eternal Life belonging to Him.

If they enter through this door and remain dead to the world with Christ, they are alive unto God, and the wolf cannot follow them. The Good Shepherd does not ensure us safety from the wolf, if we remain in the world regardless of that spiritual death whereby we have passed into the kingdom of God. He has opened for us the door of safety, and we must avail ourselves thereof.

When we contemplate the suffering whereby He opened this door, we must not complain of any remaining suffering which may be our condition while we strive to follow Him. He will strengthen us to bear it. Without the effort of faith to appropriate the gift of Eternal Life in Christ by suffering, we should not be capable of rejoicing in that Eternal Life hereafter. We must take up our Cross and follow the Crucified. He gives us the new life as partakers of the Divine Nature. If we do not use the power of that new birth so as to glorify God in struggle with Satan, we must die to it—for life is action—and we cannot have the Divine Life without performing Divine actions. We must follow our Good Shepherd, rejoicing in His tender care amidst the sufferings of earth, that we may rejoice in His glorious manifestation in the triumph of the last great day.

b. Thus do the sheep enter through the outer

door of the Humanity into the inward sanctuary of the Godhead. Jesus is the Door of the sheep. Unless we know Him as the Door, we cannot follow Him as the Shepherd. He is the Door, prefigured by the blood-besprinkled door of the Israelites at their Egyptian Passover. We must not come out of the house until the morning of the Resurrection. If we cease to be buried with Christ, letting our hearts return to the evil world of fallen nature round about us, we come out of that Sacred Burial to perish with the Egyptians. We must not come out of that house of burial until we come forth to join in the march of Exodus to the promised land, whither God is calling His sons. God calls us thither as the members of His Son. We cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven except in virtue of our union with the Son of God as members of His Body.

c. There was a door of old, the door of prophecy and guaranteed inheritance, whereby the Glorious Shepherd Himself came into the fold. The Porter opened to Him, *i.e.* the Holy Ghost, by Whom, according to the prophets, He was miraculously born, "made of a Woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law." Any who might claim to be the shepherds of God's people, who were not thus "conceived by the Holy Ghost," had no claim to the title of the Glorious Shepherd. Whatever following such impostors

might obtain, their power could not last. The sheep would not hear their voice. The wolf would scatter the sheep. The shepherds are fled and the sheep are without protection. The glorious Shepherd is come that the sheep may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. This abundant life is life within the sanctuary of the Divine Nature which the wolf cannot touch. Jesus is the Door through which we find the only entrance into this Divine Life. The unity of His Divine Person makes us partakers of the Divine Life, if we are made His members. His Humanity is thus the door of the sheep, and the indwelling Spirit is the Porter Who admits us one by one into this heavenly state. Thus shall it be said of each one of us, "This man was born there." The Spirit Who opened the door into the fold for the Son of God by miraculous conception, the door of prophecy, opens for us the door into the mystical and Divine Life of the Son of God by regeneration, the door of grace.

d. This is true for Jew and Gentile alike.

In olden time the legal fold separated the chosen people from the world, that Christ might be born amongst them. The fence of the Law was to shelter the way by which God should come to Zion. At the same time there were other sheep scattered upon the mountains. They all belonged equally to the glorious Shepherd. Nevertheless

the folded flock and the scattered sheep were all equally exposed to the assaults of the wolf. The old Law did not give life.

Now there is no longer any fence separating off the chosen people from the nations of the world. All who hear the Voice of Christ and come to Him, so as to be His true sheep, are born again into a new life. Instead of the separation by the fence of the Law, there is the separation by the power of the Spirit. "As many as receive Him to them gives He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in His Name, which are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of man, but of God." There is one flock, gathered out of the nations of the world. There is one glorious flock, having Divine Life, and One glorious Shepherd Who is both God and Man.

How carefully must we cherish this Divine Life, as the power wherein the Incarnate Son calls us to follow Him. We must follow him, dying to the world.

Oh, how we ought to examine ourselves, especially as Priests and as Religious, whether we are really dying to the world. Oh, we may be working for heaven, and yet, if we are not dying to the world, our work avails us nothing. We ourselves, even though we be shepherds having office in the flock, are sheep, and must enter in through the door. He is ready to hide us in His Wounded Side,

but we must be coming in every act of our daily life to be hidden in Him, that we may be truly dead to the world ?

Wherein then are we dying to the world ? Wherein do we know ourselves to be living, not only for Christ in the world, but for God in Christ as those who are dead to the world.

Glorious life of the Divine Flock ! Wonderful Love which calls man to partake thereof ! Wonderful condescension which uses man as the instrument for the ministration of such heavenly grace ! Wonderful responsibility whereby the priest is chosen to be the representative of Christ, the Chief Shepherd, the triumphant Lamb of God ! Wonderful power of the Holy Ghost which gives to man in all his weakness, physical, moral, and spiritual, the sufficiency for the accomplishment of so great a trust !

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us !

MEDITATION XXI.

THE GRACE OF THE MEDIATOR.

I. *The Ministration of Grace in the Church.*

S. JOHN pointed to Christ, Who was come in order to redeem. We convey blessings from Christ, Who is ascended on high because He *has* redeemed.

I. The gifts of His grace are living gifts, and have no efficacy save what belongs to them in union with Him in His Glory, by the Personal Power of the Holy Ghost.

The Spirit, Whereby He redeemed, must be operative in every act which is done by virtue of His Redemption.

Our personal acts towards God have their value by the Power of the Holy Ghost, uniting us to Christ, and elevating us to approach the Father in the sphere of His Glory.

Our ministerial acts towards men have their value by the same Presence of the Holy Ghost, filling the earthly form with the living Glory of the Mediator hidden within them.

There must be no break in the Divine Gift, which issues from the Throne of grace, when it passes through our ministrations to the earthly worshipper.

2. The Living Spirit of Christ is the Bond between our personality and His Glory. We are not His authorized agents, to act in His Name because He is gone ; but we are His living organs, to act in the communicated power of His Divine Name, because He is with us as the Head of the Body ; and the acts done through our hands and lips have their origin, their strength, their life, from Him, and not from us, in Him as acting through us.

To act in His Name is to act in the living power of the Incarnate Being of Christ ; for the Name of Christ is His living Incarnate Power, including both the Divine Personality and the glorified Humanity. He is the Head of the Body. In Him dwells the directing energy.

How much the Church loses because the divisions of Christendom hinder the various sections of Apostolical organization from receiving this directing power in its completeness ! Were the Church truly one in all her ministerial functions, we might look for the inspiration of Christ to act throughout the whole body with His Personal control ; whereas in a divided Christendom the various sections have each of them but a limited share in that immediate and sovereign co-operation. We cannot look for

the perfections of the undivided Church in the separate and frequently antagonistic movements of the several parts.

The perfection of the Headship of Christ cannot be regained by any human arrangement for effecting such unity : much less by any assertion of individual power within the Church, which may seek to replace Him Who is the only Head. The perfections of the Church cannot be concentrated in any individual. They cannot exist save as constituting the vital individuality of the whole Body. We have to thank God that the Spirit of Christ is not withdrawn from us. But we must feel that none of the perfections of the Church can be regained until the whole Church has the active Headship restored in its Catholic integrity, not merely as guiding the various portions of His Body by individual care, but the whole Body collectively by the unity of impulse and mutuality of love. Christ is not wanting on His part. The portions of His Body mar His sovereign action by their individual self-will.

The Holy Spirit of Christ is still dwelling within His Body as a living and illuminative principle ; but we must wait to see the Church in all her glory, freed from every spot and blemish, in the manifestation of the Heavenly Jerusalem. Then shall the perfections of Christ the Head be manifested in the City which is built at unity in itself.

The Lord God will lighten it, "and the Lamb is the Light thereof" (Rev. xxi. 23).

Meanwhile we have to recognize the grace of the Mediator amidst all the corruptions which cling around the earthly organization. The corruptions belong to the human personalities through which Christ acts in His Church, but the organism by which He acts is itself Divine.

If we reflect aright, we shall see that the smallest imperfection is as inconsistent with the Divine perfection of the organism as the greatest corruption could be. The whole Body is not to be perfected up to the demands of the Divine intention. It has to be purified from all imperfections, so that the Divine Life which is obscured by the sins of the members may shine out in its fulness and clothe them with its glory.

The grace of the Mediator is purifying individual souls, so that they may shine forth at last in His glorified Body without any flaw ; but they have to be wholly purified from what is natural to themselves, that they may be transparent crystals through which His Light may shine.

II. *The Necessity of Purification.*

If *they* must be pure, of old, who bore the vessels of the Lord, how much more those whose bodies are the very channels of Christ's Life, for the sanctification of His members !

1. The grace of Christ is transmitted through us independently of any worthiness of our own ; but the dulness of our apprehension holds us back from giving it forth so that the people can receive it in its integrity. Our want of devotion in giving makes *them* incapable of receiving.

Moreover, our want of purity blinds us, so that we do not see God as we ought to do ; and if we have no worthy perception of God, we cannot lift up their minds to the purity of contemplation.

Their power of faith and perception depends upon *our* ministration, and our ministration depends upon the purity of our own intercourse with God.

How sadly do we rely upon accidents, which are too often hindrances rather than helps, instead of cultivating the real Presence of the living Saviour in our hearts, which alone can make our ministries triumphant. No surrounding evil can resist the influence of this ministerial grace, if we really live therein. It is the Presence of the Mediator, God and Man, Who takes us up into His Manhood that we may live in the participation of His Personal Godhead. All Christians must thus look to Him as the Head from Whom their sanctification is to be derived ; but we who are the agents of His sanctifying power, as S. Paul says, "ministering the Spirit," must above all be careful to keep our ministrations pure from earthly motives, and also to have our interior life, in all our ministry, kindled

by the glow of that Divine energy, which alone can satisfy our ministerial responsibilities.

As we minister the Baptism of water, we hand on to every individual the Pentecostal fire of the Holy Ghost. The Eternal Spirit, Who came down from the Throne of Christ baptizing the Apostles so as to inaugurate the Kingdom of Heaven, flows on through our ministries, that being born again of Water and of the Spirit, men may enter into the Kingdom. The fiery descent which was visible on that day of institution is equally efficacious in every baptism that we administer. Fire is always the representation of Heavenly descent, and water is the symbol of the transmission of the grace which, though it cannot come down afresh from Heaven, is unfailingly communicated through the earthly ordinance.

How pure must we be, if the ministry of the Holy Ghost in Absolution is not to be our destruction, while it purifies, through our words, the soul of the faithful penitent!

When we stand at the Altar, not as earthly priests, but as being ourselves summoned within the Veil to plead the Sacrifice of Christ in the glory of the Holiest, as representatives of the Great Melchizedek, how must we tremble to think of being so unworthy to lift up before God the Body and Blood of that pure Offering! By that the world has been redeemed; and now in the Presence of

the Holy Trinity our persons are called to act in all the glory of the Incarnate Sonship, that Jesus Christ may be glorified in giving forth the gifts which are the reward of His Passion. Who is sufficient for these things? If we are not living in habitual watchfulness, so as to cherish the Presence of the Mediator as the principle of new life, how can we approach time after time to exercise the heavenly function of this unchangeable Priesthood?

The Veil of the Temple is drawn aside. We have to stand before the Heavenly Mercy-seat ministering the Blood of Jesus! How careful must we be that when we come down from the Heavenly Mount we do not extinguish, by the secularity of our demeanour, the glow of the Divine Love which the Sacrifice should kindle in the hearts of all who witness our ministrations!

2. Before Christ came, the ordinances of Mosaic worship were lifeless forms. The people who took part in them could only practice an *external* obedience. They did not know the spiritual realities which their service symbolized. Yet must the priests be hallowed, even for that one service—the bearing of the vessels.

Now, we are the living *personal* organs; and to fail in purity of the whole nature, is a violation of the sanctity of Christ's Personal Life into which we are assumed—both as Christians, and still more as Priests.

III. *The Integrity of Purification.*

The purity required of us must include body, soul, and spirit.

1. While we minister in Christ's Body, we have to meet the assaults of Satan in all our nature. He is specially anxious to destroy the ministers of Christ.

How few Priests will be saved! What care must we take to have our portion with the Blessed Ones!

No gifts of nature—no *χαρίσματα*—will avail, if Christ has not been within us, the Active Principle of holy living.

No outward success, no commendation by our fellow-men, will ensure for us acceptance in the Great Day.

To have cast out devils from others—while yet the devil has secretly got possession of some element of body, soul, or spirit, in which we have not fought against him—will not be a plea for acceptance.

2. The interior victory must precede external victories. It is very unlikely to follow them. No! Those very victories are most apt to deceive us. We must die to Satan and to the world and to self. Only by death can we attain the purity we need for our office. We have to be dying daily.

A death and a coming back to earthly life avails not. We *seem* to die. The root of impurity, whatever it be, is apt to rise up stronger than ever. Perhaps it may rise up in some new form.

3. Body, soul, and spirit must be purified by the Power of the Holy Ghost operating within us, not only continuously, but increasingly.

So must the prayer be fulfilled in our own struggling experience, which must be the voice of our ministry in the sympathy of Apostolic grace.

The very God of peace sanctify you wholly ; and so may your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

MEDITATION XXII.

THE REDEEMED UPON MOUNT ZION.

"I will betroth thee unto Me for ever ; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness and in judgment and in lovingkindness and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord."

MOUNT ZION is the hill of Divine Sonship where Messiah was to be enthroned (Ps. ii. 6). Here the 144,000 follow the Lamb. They are made partakers of His Throne, kings and priests for ever (Rev. v. 9). The Lamb has "purchased them to God in His Blood from every tribe and tongue, and people and nation." This purchasing from among men must not be confounded with redemption from the power of Satan with a mighty Hand and stretched out Arm, in which all mankind are partakers. That redemption by power was accomplished on the Cross when Christ's Blood was shed. Although we use the word "redeem," yet the word "purchase" is never in Holy Scripture applied to that deliverance. This "purchase" is not by the shedding of Christ's

Blood, but in the efficacy of His Blood. "This is He that came by Water and Blood." It is the Blood flowing with Divine Life from the pierced Side of Him Who lived even in death, the Blood sprinkled as a regenerating power upon the hearts of the faithful in the Sacraments of the Church. By this Christ purchases His Church from amongst mankind to be His Bride. Such purchase was essential to true wedlock. The bride came thereby into the dominion of the husband, both in Jewish and Roman law.

The gifts whereby Christ purchases us, are the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the gift of immortality abiding in His Precious Blood which communicates to us His Holiness, and identifies us with all the interests of the Bridegroom. In being thus bought into His bondage by the heavenly wedlock, we obtain the true freedom of man. We cannot have that freedom in any other way. Mankind are the slaves of sin until they become the slaves of Christ by the surrender of our nature to be one with Himself, as our Head. Dying to self, "decapitated" (Rev. xx. 4), we live to Him and in Him, so that we are taken up into the glorious liberty of His Divine Sonship. All that He is, we are. He makes us kings and priests unto God, for He makes us children of God. "If the Son shall make you free, then are ye free indeed" (S. John xiii. 36).

I. The Number of the Elect.

The 120 of the Christian nucleus is developed into the square number and multiplied by the 10, which indicates perfection.

This perfected Church are standing upon the heavenly Zion, and the Name of the Father is written upon their foreheads. They are the Bride of the Lamb, and so they are partakers of His Sonship.

We are come to Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the general assembly and Church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven. Their names are written in the Book of Life, and the glory of the Divine Sonship is inscribed upon their foreheads. Such is the unity of life wherein they live with God, and God lives in them.

There must be a corresponding fellowship now in the kingdom of grace. God accepts us as His children, and our foreheads, signed with the Cross in Holy Baptism, must not only receive the symbol of the crucifixion wherein we are dead to the world along with Christ, but must shine forth in the presence of the heavenly host with the transfiguring power of our regenerate life. Our lives must testify to our Divine sonship. The gift of Life cannot be kept by us as a secret. We must let the Divine Light so shine forth in our daily conduct

that men may see our good works and glorify our Father Which is in Heaven.

This life with Christ is not reserved for a future state. It must be exercised now in the kingdom of grace. There will be no further inscription at the last Day, although there will be a manifestation of the result of grace. Then it will be seen whether we have persevered in the life of our new birth; but if the light does not shine upon our foreheads by holy energy, our names will die out of the Book of Life, for we lose our hold upon the active principle of grace. That principle must be cherished by us in its activity, if we are to be finally accepted in its glory.

II. *The Song of the Heavenly Zion.*

The voice of many waters heard from heaven signifies the utterance of the redeemed. "Ye waters that are above the firmament, bless ye the Lord." These are the heavenly hierarchy who are thus designated, and these are the multitudes of the redeemed who in some manner correspond with them. The water is the symbol of birth, and so here of heavenly birth, the new life of the baptized. The sound of many waters indicates the utterance of all as having one soul. How jubilant is the sound! How the swell of sound transports us with its immensity! How must the ear of faith

listen joyously to catch the heavenly music ! We must hear the Blessed praising God, and gather fresh elevation of heart to join along with them. What though men outwardly, even Christian men, are so dull in praising God ! We must have our part in the Communion of the Saints, with those that are stored on high. With Angels and Archangels, and with all the Company of Heaven we must laud and magnify the Name of God. Do we not long, as we listen, to be transported, that the huskiness of our earthly utterance may pass away, and our souls may exult in that marvellous majesty of jubilation ?

The voice wherewith they praise God, is the return to God of that great Voice wherewith He created them. It is the Voice of great thunder. One swell of sound spreads through them all. It is the Voice of the Lord, the Voice of God speaking by His Only-begotten Son, and speaking in the consciousnesses of all the redeemed who are filled with His inspiration. No word of man can formulate what that Voice utters. It is one infinite consciousness of Divine glory which makes all that multitude rejoice in their Divine Sonship by the power of the Holy Ghost. The utterance is as infinite in number as it is in power. One undivided consciousness speaks through the infinite individualities which are united together in the common inspiration of the undivided Spirit of

praise. One mind and one mouth! One life! That life is the Life of God. It is the expression through created organism of the infinite joy wherewith the Consubstantial Son of God exults eternally in His knowledge of the Father Whose Word He is. The glory which the Father has given Him, He gives to His people, and that glory is nothing else than the knowledge of God uttering itself in the joy of praise.

This voice of thunder, however, is the voice of harpers, harping with their harps. The harpstring, formed from a thing of death, is the symbol of the praise which man gives to God. Our bodily nature, which must die, is formed anew, and tuned by grace to yield the sweet strains which befit our place among the redeemed. Those are harping with their harps whose lives in the flesh are consecrated with thanksgiving to God. The waters speak of the utterance of soul. The harps speak of the bodily instrumentation of active service whereby God is to be praised. The waters of the regenerate soul, the thunder of Divine power, the harp of suffering in the flesh, must all be contained in this Song of the redeemed upon Mount Zion.

We must think of the multitude who are gathered to their rest, but they are not dumb. Their praise is purer than could be uttered here below. We must be living in God's love and praising Him along with them. Such is the Communion of

Saints in the Holy Church. We fail of rising up to our part in the heavenly orchestra because we try to sing our part alone. If we had some consciousness of the absorbing praise in which they are occupied, we should be absorbed along with them, and we should praise God in a manner more worthy of their fellowship, more worthy of Him Whose Spirit quickens the exhilaration of praise that all in heaven and on earth may speak as one.

III. *The Persons of the Saints.*

They have been bought by Christ for Himself by a dowry of Divine Love. They are redeemed from the earth. It were in vain that we should be rescued by Divine power from the tyranny of Satan, if after all we were left under the bondage of earthly desires. We are begotten again into a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, for we are espoused to Him, as our new Husband, that we may live with Him in heavenly glory. Our Home is with Him and He makes us worthy of that Home, for He gives us His resurrection-life. The sheep are gathered through the door of His Humanity that they may die to the world in Him, and live with Him in the perfect association of the desires of His Heart.

We must feel the greatness of sin because it is

unfaithfulness to Him Who has purchased us for Himself by the communication to us of His Own Divine prerogatives. This purchase-money is not given to any strange or external power to set us free from the tyranny. It is our dowry, given that we may live with Him in the reciprocity of His Divine Love. He has betrothed us to Himself, and the purchase-money is nothing less than the gift of His Holy Spirit. He that is united unto the Lord is One Spirit. He has purchased us for Himself that we might receive the adoption of sons. His Spirit makes us partakers of His Sonship. He Who gave Himself for us to suffer in struggle with the tyrant and set us free as men, gives Himself to us and rejoices in making us partakers of His reward, by giving Himself to us that we may walk in the glorious liberty of the sons of God (Rom. viii. 21).

The Saints are, therefore, "the first-fruits to God and to the Lamb." He has begotten us with the word of truth that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures (James i. 18). The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain along with us, waiting for the adoption to be perfected by the redemption of our body. What though our bodies are still subject to Satan's external power and to the law of death? We have the life within ourselves which shall issue in the freedom of glory to be revealed not only in us but in a restored universe.

We cannot know the glory of that harvest. We cannot solve the riddle of an emancipated world. We must see that we are living true to our glorious calling as the first-fruits thereof. Pentecost is the festival of first-fruits in the ceremonial calendar. The Church in her Pentecostal endowment is the first-fruits of the macrocosm of God's Love. If we fail of yielding the homage which the first-fruits symbolized, we cannot have our part in the joy of the universal harvest.

The Saints are not defiled with women. They are virgins. All thoughts and desires of the flesh are put away. The woman is in Holy Scripture the symbol of fleshly delight. Adam fell by yielding himself to the fascination of earthly pleasure. Those who are united with the Second Adam must live simply for God. It is not only one kind of pleasure which the redeemed soul must put away. The virginity which God requires is a pure surrender of the whole self to Him.

The joy which the virgin heart finds in God must be a joy far exceeding every form of gratification which can be found outside of Him. God formed the human heart for Himself, and if He gave a partner to Adam to be his helpmeet in worldly things, yet was He Himself by His Holy Spirit the Bond of life making them both one. When Adam let the love of the fallen one draw him away from God, he lost the life which hallowed

their union. It is no true love which sins against Divine Love under the attraction of the inferior nature. All true love is virgin love purified from earthliness by the hallowing bond of Divine benediction. The virginity of Divine inspiration lifts up wedded souls, that are bound together in the power of the Holy Ghost, with a higher perfection than the mere virginity of bodily restraint. Body, soul, and spirit, must be sanctified and perfected in the love of God. In the resurrection "they neither marry nor are given in marriage, neither can they die any more, for they are equal to the angels, and are the sons of God, being the sons of the resurrection" (S. Luke xx. 36). "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (S. Matt. v. 8).

There is no deceit in their mouth. They are the children of truth, and hear the Voice of the Good Shepherd Who bears witness to the truth. The deceits of the world do not lead them astray. The Truth is their life. They live for the Eternal Truth. Deceit mingles itself with all the transactions of earthly life. These are dead to the world. These live simply dedicated in truth to God.

There can be no untruth in a life which the Spirit of God pervades. All things are naked and open to Him. The joy of Heaven will tolerate no separatedness of individual thought. We shall delight to know all and to be wholly known of all, for God is all in all. There will be

no desire of seeming different from that which each one really is. It will be the delight of all to be seen in the nothingness of their own personality, and in the glory of the Substance of God which fills their being. No excellency will bring pride where we shall all feel our nothingness. There will be no defect to hide where each one shines with the Divine fulness. There can be no separatedness of interest where all are bound in one gift of joyous inspiration. There can be no divergence of aim where all are following the Lamb.

So do the Blessed follow the Lamb. He who dwells in the praises of Israel (Ps. xxii. 4) rejoices on the heavenly height in that unceasing symphony of Divine joy which the Holy Ghost awakens from the multitude of His Elect. They are purchased by Him with the glorious dowry of the Divine life. They are united with Him in the virgin purity of Divine Love. There is no lingering trace of earth to make them unworthy of the Kingdom of the Truth. They hear Him. They follow Him. They are one with Him.

As we contemplate their glory in the Love of Jesus, we must see that we are abiding in that Love. What are they? They are one with ourselves, perfected according to the fulness of the Divine predestination, according to the sufficiency of God's covenanted grace. They live in our own

THE END

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true life. We must be true to them, else we are not true to ourselves. If we are not true to ourselves, purchased out of the world to live in the blessedness of the Bride of Christ, we die.

Our Baptism, our Priesthood, our Religious Profession, what does it all avail, if in any respect we are living as children of earth and not as children of the resurrection, finding our home in earthly forms and not following the Lamb upon Mount Zion in the simplicity of heavenly power! Blessed is the Cross whereby we may follow the Lamb through the valley of the shadow of death! But if we would know its blessedness, we must know it as the way opened into Heaven whither the Forerunner is gone up before us. Through the aperture of the Cross we must see Jesus at the Right Hand of God and all the Blessed gathered about Him, waiting for us in their joy; that as they were crucified for the Love of Jesus, so we also may pass through many tribulations into the Kingdom of Heaven. So shall the number of God's Saints be made complete.

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